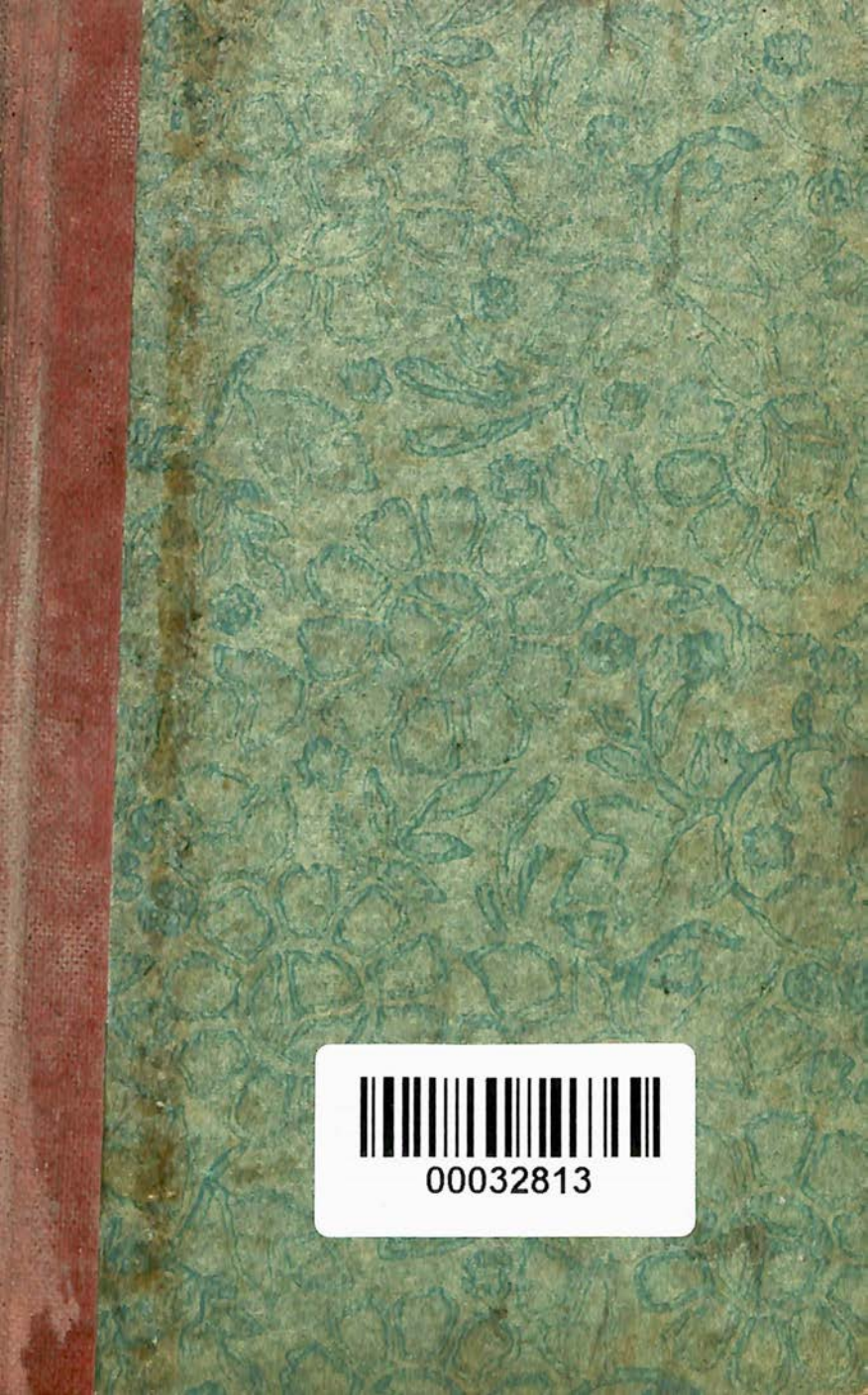
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INDIAN MEMORIES.

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BY

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AND

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INTRODUCTION

THEY floated in, these memories of that mysterious East which casts such a spell on all who venture within her grasp—floated in as old friends sat and talked by the fire, amid the roar of London traffic, or on green English lawns on gray autumn afternoons. When the wild sou'-westers raged up-Channel and the fitful rain beat on the windows, came recollections of drenching monsoons long past in Himalayan 'Cloud-Cuckoo Land' and of a 'Break in the Monsoon' in Central Indian Highlands. The scent of a *kuskus* grass fan at Liberty's brought back the breath of the hot weather in the gasping plains, a whiff of the blessed 'Coming of the Cold.' The moan of the waves on a British beach recalled the sough of

the wind among the deodars on Himalayan slopes, and cheery memories of 'Camp Life in the Hills.' Damp English woods with browning fern and falling leaves reminded one of other jungles, where 'The Idle Schoolboy' was wont to whistle 'Under the Tree-ferns,' and the Fakir fed his jackals round 'A Strange Temple' among the bamboo brake. Even five o'clock tea has power to call up a vision of a lonely green 'Tea-garden,' and the babel of children in an English nursery, the *piano* prattle of the white-faced 'Baba folk' in the deep, dim veranda of the thatched bungalow.

These are no globe-trotter's recollections culled hastily during a few weeks' cold weather scamper. They are memories of such lives as Anglo-Indians live year in, year out, of the varied homes they make for themselves in the land of exile where their motto most truly is, *Ut migraturus habita.*

INDIAN MEMORIES

OF THE PLAINS IN COLD WEATHER

THE COMING OF THE COLD:

A CANTONMENT MEMORY.

'Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte?'

How I used to be puzzled, in the days of my youth, by the expression in my Prayer-book 'moveable feast!' Tantalus and the immortal Libyan's 'parched woes' were unknown to me; but the Arabian Nights epoch of life threw a spurious light on the phrase when I read the tale of the Barmecide's feast, and came to the conclusion that a good square meal at which you never got comfortably seated was a 'moveable feast' essentially. Long-waited-for school holi-

days of Easter and Whitsuntide opened my eyes a little, and, later on, India familiarized me to the term, with its Dusserahs, Holies, and Kali Poojahs and Mohurrums. But, above all, I realized what it was by the process of longing for that most mobile and most welcome and satisfying of all feasts, the 'coming of' the cold.' To none of the quarter of a million odd of white (often far too white) faces in this land of regrets and good-byes does it come upon the self-same day, but arbitrarily and unexpectedly, as comes a sweet dream or a violent death.

Away in austral Madras, they say, it comes faintly in on December 31, to flit again on January 1, like a nine hours' excursion to Brighton. But up-country what a red-letter day it is when we realize as a revelation that the cold is coming—is now come!

I felt it last night in the jungle. The

sun had just sunk into a saffron bed, and was settling cosily into his rose-flushed pillows, so that they glowed, now ruddy, now purple, as the great sybarite orb arranged and rearranged them to his satisfaction. The new moon, in close pursuit, was visible throughout her circumference. True, only one fine horn was at work, but the whole disk stood out sharply against the deep-blue sky, so that she looked like a great white eye, with the dark upper eyelid drooping over it and arrested at the acme of a prodigious wink. The smoke hung in blue horizontal layers about the trees and servants' houses of an outlying bungalow of our little station; the air was still and dry; the blood tingled in my cheek; afar, a little flickering cloud against the sunset told of the passage of a flight of snow-white pelicans, the light on whose plumage now flashed, now died out, like moonlight on the facets of burnished

armour, and I hugged myself, inwardly and outwardly, and, with a feeling of England about, went home and ordered a fire after dinner.

It is the resurrection of all English life in India; bears may hibernate and suck their paws and live by combustion of their own fat; the *bhisti* may come with a preternatural shiver that rattles half the buttons off his belt, and may ask for warm *kupra* in a falsetto that pierces to one's heart, and servants may cough their souls out in asthmatical exaggeration in the morning, but to us it is the *reveillé* after the weary death in life, the sweltering and grilling, the unutterable boredom, of the Indian hot weather.

Viceroys and minor satraps begin to flit about the provinces, and spread white wings (fashioned by Cawnpore Dædaluses) in dubious blessing over the land that has sweated and laboured and brought forth

its fruits throughout the summer. Now the harvests are reaped and garnered, and the Lord Sahibs come to see that the increase thereof does not all go into the wrong pockets. Commissioners and collectors play at follow-my-leader, and go a-camping as well. In cantonments there are 'alarms,' excursion parties, [sham] fights, for the General must work up his brigade and the Colonel his regiment. He looks round at his full mess and big parade, and shares with the powers above a predilection in favour of big battalions. His heart rejoices; his officers are all back from leave. The hill captain has sighed his last Simla sigh, and given away his last lock of hair, (they notice how bald he is at mess). The sportsmen have left Kashmir and Thibet, and fresh young faces have joined from England, and the C. O. rubs his hands, and has only one anxiety, namely, whether the new draft will be up to form, and

his heart aches a little for the one hundred or so of good men who will be leaving, time expired, during the winter. But meanwhile the draft arrives, and all day long the parade-ground resounds with the sharp tones of the drill-sergeants, and the youthful Tommy Atkins is exhorted to ''Old yer 'ed up, and don't think about yer 'ome; you'll never see 'ome no more! Right turn;' and the adjutant and sergeant-major are in a chronic state of explosion or purple-faced despair.

Then there is sure to be a *petite guerre* across the border, either at N.E. or N.W., for the tribes get beary at the coming of the cold, and with them phlebotomy is a more popular prescription when it takes the form of a little murder or mosstrooping on the confines of the Sirkar.

The small-game shootist is furbishing up his guns, and has a Cumming camp kit and a Norwegian stove, and a large

consignment of ammunition coming up from Bombay. Polo-players are hard at work, and ponies are getting into tip-top condition. Great are the discussions in messes as to the regimental chances in the tournament that will be played at the end of the winter. Then, in a few days, when you wake in the morning, and pull an extra blanket over you, as the red dawn flushes the sky and peeps in through the glass top of your door, you may hear a ringing of hoofs on the hard road outside, while cheery voices call to you to come out, which you will do if you are half a man, for there is a cracking of whips and a 'Pack up there, Forester! get on, Gay-lass!' and an eager yelping at intervals, all which signs mean that the hounds are back from the summer kennels at Nynee, and the master and his whips are taking them out to the 'Cat and Custard-pot,' or other old hunting-grounds, down

by the river, and you can hear 'Chota' whistling (very much out of tune):

'We'll all go a-hunting to-day,
All Nature looks smiling and gay.'

Then there is the married man, who has been stinting himself all the summer that his family may have as long a time as possible in the hills. He looks remarkably cheery now, for his dear ones are round him again with bright faces, and he need no longer worry himself with the thought that Mary is looking pale, and Tommy does not care to play as he should.

We are all glad to see the children back. Indian life is too much of one age —those who are strong enough to work. The young are sent to England to live, the old have gone back there to die, and so 'those stars that within earth's firmament do shine,' as the German poet prettily calls children, are few and far

between, and we welcome them back all the more. But there is one especial lover of the cold weather, whom I nearly forgot to name, and he is the old bachelor Major, who loves a fire and a glass of port. Shakespeare swore by a good sea-coal fire, but your Indian log is a grand substitute and social centre. How the old boy smacks his lips when he sees the first fire of the winter in the anteroom! How secure and typical a position he takes up in front of it, and says, with a circular smile of bland anticipation: 'Ha! I think we'll have some of that port out to-night.'

Of course Christmas is the culminating point of the cold weather, but it is a different Christmas from that of the old country. True, the station staff officer of Burrufghur has sent us down a big bundle of hill-holly and some veritable mistletoe (which, unfortunately, has rather a sine-

cure out here), but there are too many vacant chairs always for the season to be very cheery; we miss the good fellow who 'went under' with three volleys when the cholera had its last fling at us in the autumn; we miss the chum who has retired, or gone to the other battalion; and we ourselves are proprietors, too, of an empty chair apiece at the home that we would fain be in on Christmas Day. And even in this wide India half a continent divides us, perhaps, from those who are dear, and the skeleton at our feast is obtrusively to the fore. It mocks us, and will not be exorcised with much cold *ayala* or hot Glenlivet; and our toasts seem to hark back to the sad refrain of 'absent friends,' or else we sing bitterly, 'Never row us again to shore,' and wrap ourselves in an egotism that is a poor cloak. But these are sad thoughts; let us go out of doors again.

For days the air has been a literal high-road for flights of *koolun*, packs of grouse, and great wedges of duck from across the white wall northwards, and from the Turkestan deserts and swamps to the dim north-west. Then the new moon is bringing in the snipe-like Easter excursionists. Regiments on the march to the big camp of exercise, or elsewhere in Northern India, will have a good time of it as they move slowly through the Punjab, shooting or pig-sticking every day.

That would be a good way of spending Christmas! But, above all, give me an old-fashioned Christmas camp, such as I have in my memory now! What a jolly fellow our host was, and how charming our hostess! Then they had asked just the right people and the right number. Shall I ever forget that time? The splendid mango-tope on the high grassy bank just outside the jungle, the swift,

white river rushing out of the gorge in the forest-covered foot hills, and winding round half a mile off camp, so as to make a convenient *jheel* under our very tent doors! Then there was an improvised tennis-court in the afternoon shade of the mangoes. And what grand shoots we had by day—black partridge, duck, and snipe to our heart's content! And afterwards came the sociable, well-served dinner, a lounge round the roaring camp-fire for half an hour's smoking; after it a bright short evening, during which our hostess (who never moved without music) discoursed Beethoven, or made the bulbuls despair; and we would finish up, we men, with chat round the now diminished, but still ruddy, logs; and the moon shone in lambent pallor on the snowy altar of the Himalaya in the far background, and on the rich forests in the middle distance. The voice of the river came across the

mist-shrouded swamp and up the green bank, trying to tell us the mystery of its birth-place—there in the mist of those snow altars, at which no priest has ever ministered, whose purity no foot has ever sullied. Many other voices of the night were there also—the deep quack of the mallard, the higher note of the swift teal, and the long-drawn cry of tall, solitary marsh-wading birds, the million voices of the trees, and hard by the shrill fine trumpeting of a sentimental *shikar* elephant. But the cigar-ends are all thrown into the embers of the camp-fire, and we turn in. Just as I get into bed, 'scape, scape' go a wisp of snipe over my tent. *They* could tell us what the river tried to, perhaps—the secrets of the great mountains northwards, for they have just come over them, and are dropping down for the night into the *jheel* hard by, where we shall shoot them to-morrow; and X.,

who, grave administrator that he is, loves a snipe and joke (be it never so small or so old), calls out to the impecunious sub. of the party:

'I say, B., don't those snipe remind you of your tailor?'

'No; why?' (sleepily from under the blankets).

'Well, he's got a *long bill*, too, hasn't he?'

BEHIND THE PURDAH:

A MEMORY OF A NATIVE CITY.

MIDWAY between the goats and the sheep, or, otherwise, betwixt the Civil Lines and the native city, stands the mission-house of the Zenana ladies. 'Where is Zenana?' one of these zealous toilers was once asked in an English drawing-room, when at home on an expedition to collect the sinews of war. But we in India know better. The Zenanas are always in our midst. Away beyond the mission bungalow, where the city mosques and minarets stand out against the clear sky, and the unsavoury smoke of hundreds of cooking-

fires ascends when the evening meal is preparing, where the big brown monkeys spring from flat roof to narrow street, there, whither the *ekkas* jingle, and whence come the jewellers and curiosity vendors that infest our verandas, there, in the great teeming labyrinth of the native city, there are the Zenanas, with their life-long prisoners!

We left behind us the cantonments, with the trim tree-bordered roads, the gay gardens, the rows of gaunt barracks and the din of bugles. We passed through the Civil Lines, where the bungalows are more scattered, and statelier, as befits the residences of the Exècutive, and where *chuprassies*, in official scarves, replace the red-coated sentries. We dived into a network of squalid streets, of white walls, narrow and crowded. Ruth was our companion; Ruth, sweet-faced and gentle, an outcast from home and all that life holds

dear to woman. She wore the native *sairi* enshrouding her mild, melancholy face, but she donned European shoes and stockings. Ruth came from Calcutta. When she professed Christianity her husband became incensed with her, deposing her from her position as head-wife, and driving her to live in an outhouse with her child. Ruth bore with this life for a year. Matters did not mend, and she fled to the mission-house, and became a valued helper in the work.

We descended at a sort of shop, where a Bengali baboo, one of the clerkly caste, in European clothes, and especially in the patent-leather shoes the baboo's soul loves, received us with his clipped but high-flown Anglo-Saxon, among tins of Crosse and Blackwell and rows of Lazenby and Mushroom Ketsup. Beyond the shop was a room where the family were awaiting us. It opened into the enclosed court, round which

all Bengali houses are built, the court wherein are performed the solemn, almost religious, rites of cookery, by a Brahmin servant only, at the little round stove smeared afresh each morning with mud. How dreary seemed the outlook into the dull, narrow yard after the bustle of the busy street! It was the prison-yard of the mistress of the house, who never passed beyond it! She, however, a fat little woman, seemed far from melancholy. Into the bare room she brought us chairs, and the children gathered round us, pupils in the mission school, and read to us out of the Bengali Bible. But the mother, poor soul! so long shut out from the world, was shyer than the children, and hung her head, hardly speaking. She was learning to read, too, an accomplishment it seemed odd she had not yet acquired, for she kept her husband's accounts and made her children's clothes. The missionary

lady's teaching was bearing fruit, and the baboo's wife was on the verge of becoming a Christian, and with her husband's full consent, too. Sweetmeats and glasses of water now made their appearance. Of the former, the less said the better, the mere memory is enough—but we were told it was against all etiquette to decline them, and so heroically swallowed a few. The conversation was carried on by means of a Bengali interpreter, and our hostess forgot her shyness and the small children's bright black eyes brightened, as we told of our far-off English home-life, and of other little ones so far away.

And then on to the post-office, located in an old palace, one of the many with which this once royal city abounds. In the court-yard at the back we stopped before what might have been stables or out-houses. Pushing aside the matting that screened a doorway in the wall, we

found ourselves in a little court-yard the size of a London area. All around the walls towered high. Here the shadow of the purdah fell deeper than in the baboo's shop, for the only surviving child of the old post-office clerk was a widow. Whether her husband had died when she was a child, or more recently, I did not discover. But the severe white calico garb of the widow wrapped her tall bony form, emaciated from her being allowed only one full meal a day, and she wore no ornaments. This family were very high-caste Brahmins and kept a servant, though they seemed much poorer than the tradesman we had first visited. Yet the widow, a woman evidently of more character than the baboo's shy little wife, showed me elaborate specimens of woolwork the mission ladies had taught her to do, and which were correctly and cleanly worked. But what a life—how utterly

inane, how hopelessly dreary! I felt quite relieved to hear that at her father's death the gaunt white widow would probably come out of her caste and embrace Christianity. I breathed again when the matting which concealed the doorway to the little yard swung to behind us, and once more we found ourselves in the crowded lane.

The veil of the purdah hangs less heavily over Mahommedan than over Bengali women. Though the latter, if of high caste, never quit the women's apartments, the former may drive and travel if they can do so unseen. Thus it was that the mission ladies were able to give an 'at home' to their Mahommedan friends and pupils. But the male sex was, of course, rigorously excluded; at a German *kaffeeclatch* a man could not have been more rigorously tabooed. Even the great portico of the mission

bungalow was covered in with awnings, lest a male eye should catch a glimpse of the guests as they arrived. From our social point of view it must have been rather a mixed gathering. The wealthy drove up in private carriages, or in hired *gharrys* or flys. The less well-to-do appeared in the quaint little *ekkas*, or two-wheeled country carts, with scarlet canopies, closely curtained round, wherein the occupant maintained a precarious cross-legged seat, and which were drawn by rats of ponies with jingling harness and great peaked red cloth collars embroidered with cowries. Others, again, were borne in palanquins like coffins, with closed shutters, or enshrouded with curtains, and not a few brought their children with them.

This visit to the English ladies was a tremendous event in their most monotonous lives. All the guests had donned their best clothes and wore their jewels. The

large centre room of the bungalow presented indeed a gay appearance. Assisting the mission ladies to receive was the wife of the native pastor, attired in a print dress of European cut, but with the *sairi* of thin white muslin draping her sweet Madonna-like oval face, with its pale complexion and clear-cut features, her little children round her, dressed in European clothes.

Among the principal guests was a party of richly-dressed, merry young women connected with the late royal family of Oude. They were literally loaded with jewellery. Gold and silver bangles jingled on their wrists and ankles, necklaces were wound round and round their olive throats, and frontlets glittered in their raven hair, which was elaborately braided and worn uncovered. A striking-looking group they were, with their chiselled features and merry black eyes, and their manners those

of ladies. Very well bred was the way in which they tried to be civil to me, though linguistic difficulties made our conversation rather strained. But, women-like, we had a common point in our love of jewellery. They were flattered by our admiration of their trinkets, and much regretted that we had not likewise bedecked ourselves with all our English ornaments, that they might examine them.

Apart from the crowd, upon a sofa, sat a majestic-looking old lady, wearing upon her dignified features the haughty and disdainful expression which in England we associate with Du Maurier's Duchesses. But her figure somewhat marred the dignity of her face. For this Mahommedan dowager was indeed a wondrous and fearful sight. Her form was ample, not to say stout, and her costume consisted of long and very tight trousers of gay striped silk, supplemented with a

scarf thrown round her body, exposing her fat back and shoulders.

We were honoured with an introduction to this dame, who was graciously pleased, so she put it, to permit us to make her acquaintance. She was condescending, but the conversation languished. The usual topics of husband and children, the monetary worth of the former, and the ages of the latter, which invariably interest native women, fell flat. Had a life-time of imprisonment from the world stunted the old woman's mental growth? Or was she so old that she remembered other times, when the hated white Sahib did not rule in the city, and a more recent epoch, the *bobbery*, or 'wickedness' (as my ayah once called the Mutiny to me), when he was nearly exterminated out of it? In any case, in despair, I fell to admiring her betel-nut casket. As her cigarette to the Spanish senora, or her fan to the

grande dame of the old *régime*, so is her *pan* box to the native female of every caste and religion. Each guest at this entertainment had brought hers—some of highly-burnished brass, others of solid silver, firmly padlocked. The contents were exhibited. They consisted of several small boxes containing tobacco, *pan* or betel-nut, a reddish astringent paste ladled out with a small spoon, and various other condiments, besides henna for 'making up' the eyes and eyebrows. There was a platter for the delectable betel-leaves, which they delight in chewing, and which stain the teeth a horrible brown tinge. There was a queer sort of knife for cutting the betel-nut, shaped like the old-fashioned snuffers. The smell of these condiments, which all the company chewed assiduously, pervaded the room, combined with a faint sickly odour of otto of roses, with which they were perfumed. But,

perhaps, in a London drawing-room, they would have found the scent of hot-house bouquets and of Piesse and Lubin's perfumes not less oppressive.

The mission ladies had done wisely in not trusting entirely to the art of conversation for the amusement of their guests. Securely concealed behind the sheet, an invisible missionary exhibited the marvels of the magic-lantern. But the dozen or so of English ladies present were quite as great an attraction. Their looks, their dresses, and especially their performances on the piano, excited immense interest and admiration.

'Ask that Miss Sahib to come and talk to me,' said a middle-aged woman, pointing to a pretty English girl who came in. 'I like her face—she looks as if she loved us!'

The entertainment concluded with a hymn sung by the European paid

teachers, and a nice-looking native teacher, in sweet-sounding words, but to rather a slow, sing-song tune. Then the party broke up, and the guests dispersed, to return to their death-in-life existence, as it strikes us Europeans in our *fin-de-siècle* bustle. What wonder that their minds are a blank, filled only with the most trivial childish amusement, a few domestic duties, the care, for a few years, of their children—no books, no society, no shopping! What years will it not need to break down the barrier of custom and superstition centuries have erected at the Zenana threshold, and to let in the light of freedom behind the purdah!

The aristocratic-looking dowager had condescended to invite us to call upon her, an honour of which we were not slow to avail ourselves, for she was the niece of the brother of the late King of Oude. He is the native of greatest importance

in the city since the King was been banished to Garden Reach, and gives a grand fête with fireworks and illuminations when high British officials visit it. Therefore Arabian Nights visions of Eastern splendour floated before our imaginations.

So down into the bazaar :

'There the Cabuli horse-dealers swagger
In sheepskins—the skinny side out—
And jostle the Deccan quail-bagger,
And the Vakil's ubiquitous tout.

'Staid bulls, much beloved of the Brahmin,
Stroll round, taking food as they go,
And the cat shares its meal with that "varmin,"
The bottomless-pit-coloured crow.

'While the *ekka*, a tea-tray on wheels, dear,
Flies past, as the occupants sit
(Since a pony, you know, never feels, dear),
All five, tugging hard at the bit.

'And wicked wee tats with a coat of
Fluffed wool (brought down South in the hope
Of a sale), like the man Swinburne wrote of,
"Kick heels with their neck in a rope,

'Disturbing the marriage procession,
And its cohort of tom-toming men,
And the bridegroom's sublime self-possession—
That dusky young husband of ten.

'In the midst of this turmoil pell-mell met,
You may catch from the spot where you stand
Some glimpse of T. Atkins's helmet—
The power that governs the land.

'And there are a few of the faces
Of strangers come in from afar,
Of the *olla-podrida* of races
That seethes in the Sudder bazaar.

'Some notes from the gamut of face-tints
That ranges from yellow to tar;
The pavement mosaic of race-tints
That mottles the Sudder bazaar.'

A network of tortuous dirty lanes, where the heavily-burdened coolie, the shambling camel, and the water-bullock, *mussuck*-laden, his black goat skins leaking into the dust, the rattling *ekka* and the jolting palanquin, jostled the carriage at every step, brought us to an arched gateway adorned with the painted crests of royalty. Servants in scarlet livery of the shabbiest lounged in the outer court-

yard. The opposite archway was hung with a curtain of sacking to exclude the male gaze from the women's court beyond. Here, at first sight, my dreams seemed in some measure realized. Lofty buildings with Moorish arches surrounded the quadrangle, and in the centre was a white marble tank of water, with carved lions at each corner, and containing gold-fish. Arched doorways opened into a spacious apartment, with gaily-painted and vaulted roof, hung with gilt French mirrors and Venetian glass chandeliers, such as the Rajah loves. But oh the filth! The floor was innocent of the broom or the scrubbing-brush, and bore very evident traces of the filthy habit betel-chewing induces, while the dirty bedsteads of the attendants and their rolls of unclean bedding littered the apartment.

One of a group of woolly-headed negro

slaves motioned us past their mistress's private room, through a door in the wall, into a little enclosed garden. Stiff flower-beds, fruit-trees, and flowering shrubs filled up the enclosure; but from the lofty walls there must have been a fine view of the city. Upon the pavement immediately below them, sitting on an outspread sheet, her bare feet in the gutter that bordered the flower-beds, we found the Begum. By her side sat a poor relation nursing a naughty small boy, spoilt, as all native children are, and attired in little save a gold embroidered cap upon his shaven little skull. Coolie women were gardening under the Begum's direction, and evidently not entirely to her satisfaction, to judge by her scolding. She looked no easy mistress, for her face showed much force of character and pride. But her *négligé* costume somewhat marred her dignity. A muslin

bodice and a calico petticoat, with a sheet draped over all, was not awe-inspiring. Added to which she suffered from a slight paralytic stroke, and had her head tied up in a red turban, and her chin in a pink rag.

The Begum welcomed us sedately, but did not rise. We noticed also, and resented somewhat, that she addressed us in the familiar second person plural, and not in the ceremonious third person plural. She was quite one's ideal of a Begum, barring the costume and the seat in the gutter. They brought us chairs, which they placed at a respectful distance from our hostess, so that we conversed at the top of our voices, and that of the Begum was shrill as a peacock's. She informed us that her husband, the Nawab, had seen the mission lady at a fête given by some influential natives to Europeans a short while since, and wished to learn to read

from her. But upon the latter assuring her that she only taught women, the Begum compromised matters by deciding that his sister should learn instead. We then tried to persuade her to have her photograph taken for our benefit. Native-like, she haggled awhile about the price, but finally would not agree. She discovered the photographer would have to look upon her august person through the camera!

This Begum had toyed a little with Christianity. Before she grew infirm she read the Bible a little with the missionary, and tried, like many Mahommedans, to reconcile the two creeds. She confessed to having had a wonderful vision one night when troubled in mind over some missing documents, required for a family lawsuit. She imagined Gesu (Jesus) had appeared to her and showed her the spot where indeed, next day, the papers were

discovered. There is a strong tincture of superstition in the religion of Islam.

When we took leave of our stately hostess we passed out of the other side of the garden to view the family mosque, a tiny minareted building with three-arch doorways. Of course, as women, entrance was debarred us. But the interior appeared adorned with pictures and inscriptions. Outside on the terrace, a *moulvie*, doubtless the private chaplain, was teaching his prayers to a youthful scion of the house. The boy, in best embroidered short jacket and gay velvet skull-cap, was prostrating himself upon his prayer-carpet, while the *moulvie*, his face upturned, and his hands on his ears, kept shouting 'Allah!'

Another call we paid on a less exalted, but very wealthy lady, whom we found inhabiting an extraordinarily mean and dirty dwelling, her Zenana being merely a

small court and two thatched lean-to rooms. Pigs are as well lodged in England, and, moreover, their apartments are kept sweet and wholesome! A well-dressed son of the house opened the gate to us, and ushered us into this abode, where we found the Begum surrounded by younger women, children and servants, and exuberantly delighted to see us, patting our hands and arms. Here was no aristocratic haughtiness. Nor was her appearance very impressive. She stammered badly, had a squint, and her teeth were dyed black with eating betel-nut. But her civility was great. She welcomed us effusively, inquiring after our husbands, children, and as to the income of the former! When, however, we explained that the latter question did not come within our idea of true politeness, she forthwith apologized profusely.

'Very well, then, I do not know, I do

not know!' she exclaimed, putting up her hand deprecatingly, and turning away her head.

Then she read to us a little, a baby reading book in small words, for she had not learnt long. The pictures delighted her childishly. She called in her whole household, and begged me to sing to them. Never have I had a more delighted audience than that crowd of half-clad, jabbering women in that dim shed, as I performed 'God save the Queen.' I returned the compliment by begging to see our hostess's best clothes and her jewels, hoping, after what I had heard of their wealth, for another Arabian Nights sensation. But, alas for the rights of women! they told me the Nawab was out, and that, as he kept the key, they could not get at them. Ye 'wild women' of England, think of that! I could not refrain from exhibiting *my* bunch of keys

from *my* pocket, and while engaged in this irresistible, but I fear to them tantalizing, performance, the water-carrier, bending under his *mussuck*, came in and filled up the quaint jars which stood in niches in the wall. His face was covered with a cloth, lest he should see the women!

With difficulty we got away. They would have liked to keep us there all day, our visit formed such a bright break in the gray monotony of their lives, and opened the pent-up stream of gossip inherent in every woman's breast.

WITH THE 'BABA' FOLK:

A MEMORY OF THE BUNGALOW.

THOUGH out here in this 'land of regrets we miss

> 'The whining schoolboy, with his satchel
> And shining morning face,
> Whistling aloud to keep his courage up,'

and likewise the 'maiden of bashful fifteen,'

> 'Standing with reluctant feet
> Where the brook and river meet,
> Womanhood and childhood fleet,'

the children we have always with us, both white—too white—and brown.

The latter infest that corner of the com-

pound where stands the row of mud dog-kennels yclept servants' houses, emitting towards sundown such an unpleasant smoke, and into whose dim, unsavoury recesses we never pry, though thence emerge our domestics in rustling starched raiment, and our own linen issues in spotless whiteness. Sometimes the brown babies stray into our veranda, quaint little naked mortals, clad chiefly in an embroidered cotton skull-cap, and a piece of string round their protuberant 'lower chests,' and who stare with round black eyes awe-stricken at the Sahib. I happened once on one, however, attired in a complete garment made out of my English checked dusters, purloined for the purpose by his nefarious parent, my washerman. They go to school a little, the boys to out-of-door seminaries under some shady tree, where they squat in the dust, repeating their lessons aloud after their pedagogue

in a queer nasal chant, accompanied by a monotonous waving of their bodies.

When a little older they do odd jobs about the place, and get married, a solemn and lengthened performance, extending over many days, to which we contribute by an advance of pay, and by enduring weary days and nights of the monotonous tom-toming which marks the progress of the festivities. When my ayah married her daughter of eight, I was invited to witness the sitting in state of the bride-groom of ten, and found him arrayed in a cool and airy suit made out of some of my old English muslin curtains.

A little later the high-caste girls vanish, and for ever, to be mewed-up in the seclusion of the Zenana. The boys alone remain in our midst—gossoons who rival the London street Arab in cheekiness, and whose sharpness puts their elders to shame. In this stage they are useful as servants;

but they come no longer under the category of '*baba-log*.'

Some years ago, during one never-to-be-forgotten cold weather, when Famine, hollow-eyed, stalked through the land, our compound positively swarmed each morning with native children. The vision of them haunts me still—miserable little wretches, lantern-jawed, pot-bellied, with sunken eyes and sticks of arms and legs. The people were starving, despite the relief-works, and the mere sight of the native population wrung one's heart. One could do little; but each day, from our veranda, we scattered to the children the grain on which the horses are foraged, much as one feeds the chickens in an English poultry-yard. How they grabbed it, picking each grain out of the dust! One small sister, leading a smaller brother, each with the skin literally hanging over their bones, came too late for the distribu-

tion. Weak and despairing, yet made bold by hunger, they stole round to the store-room, where I was ordering dinner. And not in vain. A large *chuppattee* (an unleavened flat cake) well spread with *ghee*, the rancid melted butter so luscious to the native palate, was their reward. But this the little sister handed instantly to her small companion, who grabbed it and gnawed it like a young wolf. Needless to say this unselfish little person got a *chuppattee* for herself.

The career of the white baby in India, if in every sense a short, is at least a merry one. In his 'mewling and puking' stage, he 'eats the air' laid out on a *gudri*, or wadded mattress, and borne about by a many-bangled *dhai*. At this period she begins, in her carelessness, the cultivation of that extraordinary out-standing appearance of the ears which, in after-life, invariably distinguishes the Indian-born

European, by not laying the minute aural appendages flat on the *gudri*. The ayah, who replaces the *dhai*, continues the process. As the baby grows, the number of attendants increases. He lives at two ayah-power, one being of high, and the other of low caste; but both devote their whole energies, such as they are, to spoiling him. The *baba* is never disciplined, but wheedled and coaxed and pandered to. There is no nursery, properly so called, in an Indian bungalow. The baby has the run of the house. You stumble over him in all sorts of impossible places, at all sorts of improper hours. The mysteries of his toilet are performed in the broad veranda, where he squats on a piece of matting with his attendants in similar positions around him, for tables and chairs are to him unknown. With queer nonsense rhymes in the vernacular, he is crooned monotonously to sleep where-

ever, and whenever, he will deign to slumber. His meals, too, are indeed moveable feasts. To attend to his commissariat another menial steps in. The kitchen-man, half-waiter, half-cook, dogs his toddling footsteps, and coaxes his poor little appetite with the plate of *pish-pash*—rice and chicken. For baby is never very hungry in India, and requires not a little humouring and coaxing to make him eat, a performance from which the high-caste Brahmin ayah and the low-caste *metrānee* equally hold aloof. The one would be contaminated by, and the other contaminate, his food. In the stables, among the many quadrupeds of an Indian establishment, baby has his own cream-coloured cow, with its special attendant *gwallah*, both requiring unremitting supervision and constant testing of the lacteal fluid on the part of the vigilant Mem-sahib, if the delicate little blossom they nourish is to thrive.

The *baba's* attire for the greater part of the year is scanty; during the hot weather it is almost conspicuous by its absence. A bachelor friend of mine going to call upon his very much married Colonel was not a little discomfited to startle, in the hall, a herd of little pink figures, minus even the piece of string which distinguished their brown brethren outside. But that was in the height of the hot weather. But strong boots, wrappings up and such-like nuisances, which the English child is heir to in our climate, are to the *baba* unknown.

But he grows apace—too fast, sometimes, even to legginess, like fox-terrier puppies bred in India. And then what legs! mere pipe-stems, and carrying a pale little languid frame, and a face where the roses are wanting. For the white baby does not play much. He is amused a vast deal, at great expenditure of time and trouble, by all sorts and conditions of

servants, who are little more than big children themselves. But he himself does not understand what a healthy romp, a good tantrum, really is. Like the present King of Spain, he lives secluded, surrounded by a submissive court. A perfect retinue attends him when he takes the air. A bearer soon replaces the nurseryman, and helps the ayah to do nothing. When he begins equestrian exercise, which he does early in a land where everyone rides and drives, his own particular groom leads his own special rat of a pony, as he trots along in the dust by the roadside.

The white baby is a great amateur of military music. He assiduously frequents the band-stand. The whole juvenile white population, with their attendant retinues swelling to quite a white-robed crowd, may be seen gathered each evening round the red-coated musicians on the Mall. The little ponies, the perambulators, and

the goat-carriages, form a little group apart. The babies scramble and toddle in the dust, and the ayahs and bearers squat around, discussing the price of *ghee* and plotting possible peculations. Papa and mamma drive or ride up, and halt for a little. But baby stays on till the carriage-lamps begin to twinkle up and down the Mall and the last notes of 'God save the Queen' die away under the heavily-scented millingtonias.

Juvenile parties, pantomimes, and even toy-shops, are unknown to the white baby. He is too much occupied in trying to thrive to have any time to waste on mere frivolities. Then, toy-shops simply are not. The Christmas mail may bring out from far-away Lowther Arcade some gift from a godparent or grandmother he has never seen; but the advent of the *box-wallah*, sneaking round into the veranda with his pack, is the greatest excitement

in the way of playthings he knows. And quaint toys they are. Mud figures from Lucknow of native servants to the life; Benares woodwork gaily painted: green dolls and horses, sets of little boxes fitting one inside the other, and many-coloured bricks—these are his toys.

Linguistically speaking, the *baba* is the connecting link between the heads of the household and the crowd of turbaned domestics who squat about the veranda. Though he has not the advantage of the instruction of the *munshi*, who presides over his male parent's studies and steers the latter safely through shoals and quicksands to the haven of the Higher Standard, baby rivals, and even surpasses, his mamma's attempts to wrestle with the servants' vernacular and to administer due reprimands in choice low *bāt*. But perhaps it is as well for the parental feelings that their offspring's Hindoostanee

is indeed only understanded of the people, or they might receive a shock; for baby picks up more than he ought during his involuntary attendance at the symposia in the veranda, or round the cook-house door. But he imbibes, too, the queer old nursery rhymes—older than anyone knows, and which bear such a strange affinity to the 'ba-ba, black sheep' idylls which lull his little cousins to sleep in their English nursery. He also becomes dimly acquainted with the old-world fairy-stories of the good rajahs and the wicked ghouls, the devout dervishes, and the vampires.

But if he has few playmates of his own age, the white child has many pets. India is the land of pets. The dog-tax is unknown, and a special low-caste servant is detailed to take charge of the favourites. The pony heads the list, and then follow dogs galore, and of parrots not a few,

from the great green ones to the hill parakeets with the plum-coloured heads, hanging perched in iron rings and making the veranda noisy. There are melodious ring-doves and smaller birds—budgrigars, Java sparrows, and love-birds—and perhaps even a spotted deer, of whose horns the child is somewhat afraid. A monkey is sure to be included in the menagerie—a little brown monkey caught from the dozens that infest the bazaar, and chained to a tree or the veranda pillars. But, in good sooth, between the *bunda* and the *baba* there generally exists an undercurrent of ill-feeling, often amounting to a guerilla warfare. The child teases the monkey, and the latter, naturally queer-tempered and cunning, resents, lying in wait behind trees to retaliate upon its persecutor.

But a change comes over the spirit of the *baba's* dream. It comes with the fall

of the mango-leaves in the Mall, dropping, after the perverse manner of things Indian, in the spring; it comes with the advent of the brain-fever bird and the punkah-coolie, and the swallow-flight of the lucky to the 'hills.' Suddenly the *baba* finds himself initiated into the mysteries of the iron way, the wonders of the 'vasty deep,' as he is borne across the 'black water' to a land of strange faces and strange tongues—a land of babel, of hurry, of gloom, where he misses his mother not a little, and his ayah and the other score of domestics nearly as much; where he makes acquaintance alike with the happiness of haymaking and the bliss of the beach, with Mrs. Markham and the multiplication-table, and bedews his Latin grammar with his tears.

We meet him at home, chiefly at salubrious watering-places and colleges for delicate boys, tall for his age, lank, and

white, and quiet, with a wistful look in his eyes, as if he were looking for people he could not find. As often as not he is in the hands of hirelings, and never 'goes home for the holidays.' Early, he learns to write letters, bound for the far-off land which has become to him a glary dream. He is part of the price we pay for our great dependency.

Away in the 'land of regrets,' the Sahib, when he returns from work, finds the bungalow very quiet, and the Memsahib for ever busy writing home letters, and counting upon the mail-day all through the week, while the parrots and the monkey at last enjoy repose.

The *baba* has 'gone home.' But sometimes in another sense. As the heat increased, the little limbs grew yet more languid, the fragile little form less inclined for play and *pish-pash*. And

'The chill frost came in the night, the night,'

as sings the bereaved royal poetess from beyond the Carpathians,

'And the flower all withered lies.
His icy touch was so light, so light,
But it closed his fair blue eyes.'

The crowded children's corner in the white-walled cemetery, round which the jackals howl, lying alone, apart from the merry Mall and the busy barracks, receives, at sundown, yet another occupant—

'The bright locks put away
Out of reach, beyond kiss, in the clay;'

and the mother sits all through the long hot hours alone in the silent bungalow.

MEMORIES OF A GREAT CITY.

'Mirantur portas, strepitumque, et strata viarum.'

A MODERN American writer has remarked that, whatever a man may appear to be to those he loves and who love him, his aspect from the point of view of strangers is the outcome of his real character. As with men so perhaps with cities; and I, as a stranger from 'up country' may see in Calcutta what old residents and lovers of it fail to notice, or pass with indifference.

In approaching Calcutta from the north-west, the first impression it conveys to me is one of verdurous vigour and growing

prosperity. The old broker or merchant may say that it is falling off, that Karachi is tapping its income from the west, or that the Far East is sending its argosies to other and newer marts; but the change from slake-baked, rocky India generally is most singular, and suggestive of vitality, as one dashes through an ever-thickening population, and views the inexhaustible richness of the great alluvial valley of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra.

Here the rivers flow, no longer in attenuated tricklings, useless for navigation and too scanty for irrigation, but in full-bosomed flood.

'Præter—
Labitur ripas Jove non probante ux orius amnis.'

The scenery is flat and monotonous, but it has a pleasing effect on eye and mind. The horizon is a waving line of feathery palms and other maritime tropical growths. A subtle bluish tint makes every pool

look beautiful, even independently of the rare water-lilies, red or white, that may be seen on the surface of the meanest village pond. Graceful ferns find a moist foothold in every 'crannied wall.'

The people do not differ greatly in appearance from the up-country ryot. The tiller of the soil is always conservative, even in face and physique as well as in ideas. But one becomes aware, as one nears the great city, of the existence of a huge 'middle class' in the population, a class hardly known up-country (except in the person of a railway official or a magistrate's clerk).

This class is rapidly adopting the ideas, the appliances, and the dress of the West. And now the train rolls slowly into a handsome terminus, and the London of the East is reached.

It may seem far-fetched, but as I pass over the Hooghly Bridge, and along the

riverside to Fort William, the white waters of the Rhone pouring themselves into the calm blue bosom of Lake Leman come to my mind. This great river pours into the bosom of the dark, once-motionless East a mighty white stream of European vigour and enterprise. The streets are busy almost as those of London. I hear the clank of steam-cranes and the rumble of heavy loads of merchandise. Here, too, are the earnest faces, the rapid footsteps, of keen-eyed toilers: and along the wharves are moored the navies of half the world.

What a forest of masts! The preponderance of sailing over steam ships is curious. Why is this? One would think that the Suez Canal and the breathless calms of Indian seas would make it all in favour of steam as against canvas. Perhaps the bar and the sandbanks at the river's mouth forbid a passage to many

steamers, whose place is taken by smaller sailing craft.

How polyglot the craft and their crews are! I see quaint schooners and brigs from the golden Chersonese, a sloop from Natal, three or four dirty-looking barques from Jeddah and Muscat, a horse-carrying dhow also from Arabia, and broad Dutch-looking steam flats for inland waterways.

Round the Sailors' Home loiter groups of English, Malay, Chinese, Italian, Norwegian, and French sailors: I even suspect one of being an American Indian from Vancouver. All nations that go down to the sea in ships are represented here. Close by, the river's sacred functions are in as full play as when Warren Hastings first set foot here; for at a *ghāt*, or water staircase, hundreds of Hindoos are bathing ceremoniously in the father of rivers, and the dead body of a pious-

sonned native floats by on the stream, with too or three birds busy upon it.

So we come to the old fort. It is a spacious star-shaped mass of earth and masonry, moated and bastioned.

Within rise tall palace-barracks of modern construction.

Fort William looks very peaceful and old-world now. Its teeth have been drawn. The cannon are all gone from its many grass-grown embrasures. The draw-bridges at the Georgian gateways are no longer raised, since no Mogul leader will ever again sound a defiance before them. The Western Hercules has apparently laid down his club and lion-skin, and thinks only of the Omphale of peace and commerce. But this outward innocence is a mere seeming. Fort William is a great arsenal, and her store-rooms are full of 'material' sufficient for any expedition to a turbulent province or a recalcitrant tribe.

It would not take many hours for every one of these empty bastions and smiling embrasures to bristle with the newest and most deadly of cannon, that now lie out of harm's way under cover.

The Commander-in-Chief in India lives here when in Calcutta; and the old pomp and circumstance of military ceremonial are to a certain extent kept up.

It is very interesting to wander round the lawns and quadrangles of the fort. There is a beautiful church, of Perpendicular architecture, and with a richly-painted chancel (a labour of love executed by an engineer officer). Round the aisles are hung banners of old East India Company regiments, and tablets to the memory of many a gallant soldier who has fought and died in the building up of our Indian Empire.

Old cannon, many of them of beautiful proportions and richly chased, stand at

every turn in the paths. On one is a Latin inscription that carries one back to far-distant days, for it tells how 'This gun was made for the glory of God and the service of King Philip of Spain, and of his Queen, by Pierre Ribot, at Bayonne, in 1590.' Many cannon bear names, like ships. One having the well-omened name of 'San Fausto' was 'made at Amstelredam by Jan van Hws in 1546.' This is an especially beautiful piece of ordnance. It is covered with tracery worthy of an Etruscan vase, in which are shown satyrs unveiling a sleeping nymph, and beautiful flowery scrolls, cut deep in the solid bronze.

As I passed the great Bhurtpore trophy gun before the officers' quarters, a party of Sikh sepoys approached, salaamed to, and patted it, with reverential thoughts, doubtless, of the great Punjab warrior in whose behalf it had once poured forth its deadly charges.

Its weight is nine tons seven hundredweight. The Woolwich Infant is by no means a latter-day English monopoly.

I naturally ask for the Black Hole of Calcutta, but learn that it was not in this, but in an older and now demolished fort. Improvement has wiped it away. Perhaps there is no need for any pretence at regret. As I go about Calcutta, many beautiful statues and monuments meet my eye, but birds are no respecters of art, and unsightly signs of obscene fowl deface the effigies of India's noblest soldiers and administrators.

The streets are lighted with gas, which gives a homelike look to everything. Active water-carriers sprinkle the roads and footpaths, giving a very cool and well-kept appearance to the principal thoroughfares. The dirt and bad odours of the more crowded bazaars and back streets are truly Oriental, and Calcutta would pro-

bably run a dead heat even with Peshawur in this respect.

Old settlements are naturally more comfortable than new, and more substantial. Time and thought and money have been expended on them. Thus the 'City of Palaces' is a well-deserved title for Calcutta.

We of Upper India are constantly in a state of 'move.' We have no abiding city. Any mud-built hovel is good enough for the subaltern who will be marching away next winter, or for the joint magistrate who will be transferred in the spring. Of course, the Mofussil is improving in these matters, but still the substantial comfort, the airy spaciousness of Calcutta are unique in India.

In my first morning ride I was struck by the number and high class of the horses I saw. Nowhere out of England are there such splendid animals to be seen as here.

The pick of Australia, of the Cape, of Arabia, and of English studs, canter past me in rapid succession: The Calcutta man is not up to his horse, though. The fact soon explains itself. The Calcutta man seldom gets more than his hour's canter before business. And there is no pig-sticking to shape him into his saddle.

But it is hot on the Maidan! Come into that green enclosure over by Government House. The river runs close by the enclosure. What a paradise this is! The sun is setting luridly behind a dense bank of clouds, and in a murky halo of steamer smoke the tracery of the rigging of a thousand ships makes gigantic cobwebs against the western glow. The voice of the sea whispers up the river on a cool breeze that thrills among the tall masts.

As I enter the gardens (passing by a

cricket-ground that has no rival for beauty or for condition in the world) a perfect fairyland meets my eyes. Kew Gardens are a tame imitation of this. Beautiful lotus-starred pools mirror umbrageous bamboo brakes, thickets of palms and palmettoes, and banks of fern and rare exotics of every kind. The light is dim, and an odorous coolness pervades the place. The crows are coming into the trees by thousands, to roost for the night.

A tall Burmese pagoda rises in grotesque beauty of wood-carving among the leafage. I pass on to a great lawn, where a military band is about to play, and the electric light suddenly flashes out along the river and among the palm-trees. It falls upon a motley assemblage. There are promenaders of every colour—white, black, brown, yellow, and green; and at sight of this kaleidoscopic crowd I again think of the

meeting of the waters. Society here does not look half so comfortable as on our Mall up-country. It wears the tall hat and black coat of civilization, and the thermometer is not in keeping with such toilet. I hurry away in my veranda-made clothes, feeling that I have stepped in where angels might fear to tread. The name of these gardens is Eden. I feel that such an Eden is forbidden to badly-dressed Adams and Eves.

As I pass out through the gates, a ragged, degraded-looking half-caste passes me, begging. It gives me a shock, coming from a province where even the half-caste has brevet rank as a sahib, and is never in want. This man is evidently an outcast, and in misery. The meeting of the waters is not an unalloyed good. The question that many have tried to solve in India recurs to my mind, 'What are we to do with these helpless waifs on the

waters of the West and the East ?' They are neither flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. The army, whether British or native, will not have them, and they cannot dig.

AN INDIAN WELL:

A HOT-WEATHER MEMORY.

I FANCY that the homestaying Englishman cannot possibly conceive what an Indian 'hot-weather' afternoon *up-country* is like. Even those that go down to the sea in ships and cross the equator or coast along the West of Africa do not meet with anything like it, and the down-country folk in sea-girt, palm-fringed Bombay never experience to the uttermost what unknown quantities it takes to indicate a summer afternoon's heat in the Ganges Valley—where the thermometer stands at a hundred and anything you like, or don't like, under

your thickest helmet, and where Tommy Atkins asserts that there is only a sheet of brown paper between himself and what many people regard as the last destination of the heathen. No wonder the thermometer bursts with its own caloric, the flying-foxes hang motionless by one leg in the shade of the thickest fig-trees, the crows and other obscene birds sit about and gasp, with wings outspread, to try and have a thorough draught through them, and the very flies go to roost and cease from troubling!

All is hushed and quasi-dead! And the end of an up-country summer day is the worst part; it is, like the scorpion's tail, the 'business end' of it. The broad sun is still laughing his pitiless laugh on high, and, Parthian-like, slays as he retires.

On such a day, over thirty years ago, a battle had raged from pallid dawn to

brazen noon, and now was dying to fitful musketry accompaniment, as the British forces were clearing the sepoy mutineers out of the little hamlets that surround the large walled city of Bareilly.

Beside their agricultural population, these hamlets were inhabited by the pariahs, such as leather-workers, washermen, and scavengers of the city itself, and were built of mud, in such irregular fashion that they afford excellent shelter and standing-ground to the foe; and every one of them had proved a very Plevna for our men. The nature of the country, too, had made it hard to carry, easy to hold; for mango-tope after mango-tope had to be shelled. Tall and broad belts of elephant-grass divided the sandy fields, cactus and aloe hedges (to which an English bullfinch is child's play) surrounded the gardens and all the more valuable crops, while old mosques and

palace-ruins gave the sepoy innumerable rallying-points that had to be cleared out at the point of the bayonet.

But, at last, the work was over, and bugles along the line sounded a general halt. The army was to bivouac on the hardly-won field, to lie down in its tracks, like an overdriven ox. No 'march to quarters' to find a good 'square' meal, and have a good bed to lie on afterwards, only the slake-baked earth for bed, the chance handful of corn and scrap of goat or commissariat beef to eat, the fetid puddle to drink from, and yet more fighting and heat in store on the morrow; and so, in the hamlet of Hajamganj, Captain —— assembled at the end of this day's work his company of the 60th Rifles.

The village threshing-floor was the point from which the bugler sounded the company order to 'close.' And through

the deserted streets the company came, in pairs and groups and singly, from different parts of the bamboo-hedged village, to fall in.

What a mistaken idea the popular one is of a conqueror! We think of him as moving proudly, if blood-spattered and dirt-stained, carrying his head aloft as if the guerdon of laurel and the smile of fair women had already fallen on him, and we seem to see his form braced by the past struggle to even grander proportions of manhood! Not so in reality.

The dogged victor has struggled up the fire-swept scarp, and has ousted the vanquished from his post; but the victor is but human, and very weary, far wearier often than the foe. Nothing but the *élan* of success carries him on; the blistered feet struggle forward, and the straining pulses throb a tired 'tattoo' to his brain. Great leaders know this well,

and know, too, that a well-timed counter-stroke will often hurl the grasping victor back in disaster, just as his hand was clutching the enemy's banner on the corpse-strewn parapet!

But it was not so on that day. The fighting was over as far as the infantry were concerned; the light horse were in hot pursuit miles ahead, and nothing was now to be done by the company except to get a drink as best they could, and then think of the bivouac and the mess-tin.

What a draggled, dirty, worn-out lot they were! Stalwart and tried, it is true, but they had shot their bolt for the day, and were dead beat. All was hushed in the village — every soul, yes, even the birds, had taken to flight, save a few crows who were discussing the enemy's inroads, in excited conclave, over the village corn-dealer's shop.

A few dead men lay quietly about, the

sun laughing in their rigid faces, the flies beginning to settle on their bloodstained clothes and drawn features; and on some the linen clothing—ignited by the close-range flash of musketry—smouldering as at a sacrificial altar.

'Now, my men, you've done right well, so let's look for a little shade and water. Has anyone seen where the village well is?' So spoke the Captain.

'Beg pardon, sir, but I seed it round that 'ere corner jist by that there big peepul-tree with the temple under it.'

'Ah! thanks. March at ease; quick march!' and soon the company was halted and fallen out under the big peepul-tree, and all hands looking for rope of any kind wherewith to lower pannikins into the cool, deep well.

The Captain got on the well-parapet, and was just looking down, when his attention was attracted to a strange sight.

By the parapet of the well, on the far side, crouched an old woman—too old and decrepit to fly with the rest, he thought.

Her withered form but half covered in squalid rags, her eyes sunken, her toothless jaws meeting nut-cracker-like, regardless of the surrounding soldiers, she sat rocking herself in feeble woe and mumbling a sort of half-articulate dirge—a very Rachel in an abomination of desolation! At this moment the Captain's attention was again diverted by a startled exclamation from the colour-sergeant. He looked down, and in the silent depths of the well saw, not the blue burnished mirror reflecting the sky and his own face that he expected, but a strangely turbid rippling on the water. Was it the gush of springs replenishing the well? Was it the never-absent frogs playing on the surface?

'Great God, sir, there's a head a-movin' down there!'

Sudden silence fell on the parched, water-craving men. What could it mean?

Then, to the gradually accustomed eyes of the gazers became visible, not only one, but many small round black heads of Indian babies.

The truth burst upon the Captain.

Most Anglo-Indians know the law of mental gravitation that takes the Indian woman in any grave trouble—whether conjugal, or social, or of whatever nature—to the village well. It is their solution of all difficulties, as the 'happy despatch' is to Japanese nobles and sea-slugs, or as the abandonment of its tail is to the lizard. The law had worked in this case, and the well was choked with the bodies of women bearing their babes in their arms, and unable to fly.

'Here's a rum go! Spoilt the water!

D——n the —— niggers!' etc. I need not describe the consternation of the suffering men; for the water—the only water, probably, for miles round—was evidently churned up and polluted beyond drinking even by men who were dying of thirst.

Just then, as if in irony, one man appeared with a rope; and at that sight the bitter oaths and jests grew more bitter and deep, and the humour of the scene disappeared in the face of its grim reality.

Then from the depth of the well came a moaning cry—a little wail of weakness and suffering, so feeble that nothing but its thin treble, and perhaps the speaking-trumpet effect of the well-shaft, made it audible above the deep curses of the angry men above.

The Captain started, and then looked pityingly at his men; but he said nothing, only with an eloquent gesture of his brown

right hand he pointed into the darkling well.

Tennyson has told us how a baby's cry can make the sacred bosom of motherhood burst its bodice with yearning; and I think something sacred must have animated those fierce soldiers then, for in one moment more they had burst into eager solicitude of word and action. A slim sergeant (Toole by name) volunteered to be lowered by the lately-found and no longer despised rope (a rope so thin that one might hesitate to trust one's self to swing on it over an English lawn), and then the harvest of the well, the salvage of death and life, began. In half an hour the well was emptied of its terrible prey, and ten dead women and two dead babies lay limp and shapeless on one side of the big peepul-tree, and eight living babies lay huddled and writhing and shivering together hard by; and the old crone had ceased her

Rachel-like dirge, and was stooping over them in feeble solicitude, and trying to spread her scant rags over the baby limbs.

Very awestricken was that brave sergeant's face, very low his voice, when he was at last drawn up, his task ended and the well clear.

'Begor! thim wimmen was huddled thegither like sacks o' meal, and propped up their babbies, and jist let thimsilves git drownded a-doin' of it!'

'Dearie, dearie me!' muttered the colour-sergeant; 'it's jest the same as ef they'd been Christians—like our own mothers might ha' done to us when we was little lads.'

But this was only a diversion, and an unpleasant one; the well would take hours to clear, and meanwhile where to get drink and food?

Just then came a sweet tinkle-tinkle

from beyond the temple, or village shrine, and there appeared a herd of milch goats browsing their way homeward through the lengthening shadows, unguided save by the bell-bearing nanny at their head. It was a perfect pastoral in the midst of this scene of war and horror; nay, more than a pastoral, for pastorals are not substantial, and milch goats, their udders full from a long day's feeding on *dhab* grass, mimosa and peepul-leaves, and bamboo-shoots, *are;* and, with a shout of eagerness and relief, the whole company threw themselves on the herd. It was not easy to catch them, and legs and arms were flying very much *à la* windmill during the process; but at last most of the goats were captured, and Privates Hodge, late cowman in Warwickshire, and Jones, late goatherd in Carnarvon, were in great request, and pannikins being filled or shaken impatiently.

But meanwhile the warm air had revived

the shivering babies; and perhaps they scented the milk, for a cry, great and doleful, broke forth from them all with one accord — a cry of motherless and nigh-starving helplessness.

And again the Captain looked pityingly on his men, and at the babies, too. And he called silence, and then he said:

'Men, you have fought for and earned everything you have, or could possibly get this day. I don't order you—I don't even ask you—only—those children's mothers are drowned — and those children are starving.'

And the men in their turn looked on the children, and again something sacred in them cried out and bade them what to do, and, in a twinkling, every baby had a big-bearded nurse, with another big-bearded under-nurse to chafe its little limbs, and draughts of rich goats' milk held to their mouths, so tenderly, if awkwardly withal,

that the Captain, strong gallant English gentleman that he was, turned on one side with a half-sob, and then drew his weary form up in pride to think that he had the honour—yes, the honour—of leading and fighting with such men as these.

* * * * *

What matter if the old she-goats the company, Captain and all, ate that night were coarse and tough and all unsavoury fare? What matter if the earth was a hard and rough bed to lie on, and the water from the slowly-settling well was but liquid mud? What matter even if a man or two died that night of sheer weariness and want? Surely their loss was gain! And perhaps to their sleeping senses came the half-consciousness of a tender presence brooding over the weary camp, like a dove over troubled waters—a presence that whispered comfort to living and dying. And perhaps to some there

came, like far-heard music, the memory of a verse heard in boyhood in the village church, or at a mother's knee—a verse that says, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.'

OF THE HILLS IN HOT WEATHER

UP TO THE HILLS:

A MEMORY OF A MARCH.

'And nightly pitch my moving tent.'

MARCH with troops? Live under canvas in the plains when the hot weather was coming on? Think of the dust, the heat, the discomfort, the being cut off from the world!

It was certainly a novel idea for a lady. Even officers do not relish the route-marches by which, when rail is not available, troops are moved in India from one garrison to another. For, though that country is a perfect paradise for camping-

out, yet marching with troops is a very different thing from the easy progresses of civilian officials in the cold weather, with a large and luxurious camp equipage, or from the independent gipsying life in pursuit of game, which not a few ladies share with delight, when their husbands or fathers betake themselves to the happy hunting-grounds of Cashmere.

The choice for me, however, lay between ten days alone in a *dâk-bungalow* (Government rest-house) at Guramghur, a station where I had few friends, and should be cut off from my pony (who, of course, would have to precede me on foot to the hills) and from my own occupations. This latter meant much. Even in March, in that part of India, no woman cared to be out of doors between nine and four, and the whitewashed, sparsely-furnished bed-sitting-room of a *dâk-bungalow* becomes a perfect gaol. The alternative was to

precede my husband, household goods, servants, and ponies, leaving them to follow with the troops, and to fly up to Paharabad, the hill sanatorium, whither we had been ordered for the hot weather, alone by post-chaise, and to take up temporary quarters at a hardly-opened hotel. For the arrival of the convalescent detachment is the first swallow of the season at these hill-stations, which are nearly deserted till then.

Neither plan seemed very alluring. So I resolved to tempt the unknown in the shape of marching with the troops.

What a heterogeneous mass they were as they streamed out of Guramghur in the uncertain dawn of that March morning, in strict accordance with that unwritten law which sends soldiers in India on the tramp at a perfectly unearthly hour, in order that the heat of the day may find them safely sheltered in the

next camp! There were smart cavalry, degraded for the nonce to the ignominy of footing it in the dust, lancers, hussars, horse-gunners, and representatives of a variety of line regiments, the whole presenting a kaleidoscope of uniforms, blue, red, tartan, and rifle-green, not forgetting the dust-coloured *karki* drill, which is *de rigueur* for active or fatigue service.

After the column came a procession of bullock-carts containing the married women and children. These, you would have imagined, would be delighted to escape from the horrors of the hot weather to free quarters in the hills. But it is not so. The soldier's wife in India is a great grumbler, notwithstanding the comforts, and even luxuries, she enjoys in that land of extra pay and of many and cheap servants. A kind-hearted Colonel of cavalry, on leaving the service, built a range of barracks at one of the loveliest and

healthiest of hill-stations, entirely for the use of the families of cavalry soldiers. Yet I have heard women grumble over being sent up there. 'It is so dull; I don't like leaving the regiment,' they said, while I vainly endeavoured to point out that married *officers* would be only too glad thus to escape the hot weather, free of expense, with *their families.*

When, however, I beheld the women and children on the march, I began to understand some of their objections to the move. Their sole habitation for ten or eleven days were the bullock-carts in which they slowly creaked along in the dust after the column. The bottom of the cart was filled with their boxes; over these lay a mattress or two, and the whole was covered in with a thatched straw cover. Occasionally, one of the clumsy, broad wooden wheels would come off and a breakdown ensue, with pots and

pans, children and baggage, flying in all directions. But, after all, the discomfort is not for long. In the lofty paradise to which we were bound, the crisp, cool air brings roses to the wan faces of the little ones, and an edge to their appetites, which will, indeed, cause their mothers to forget the weary march thither.

Last of all came the sick, the halt, and the lame. They were laid in straw in the bullock-carts, or jolted along in canvas-hooded *doolies*—those ferocious *doolies* of which we read in *Punch*, during the Afghan War, as carrying off the sick and wounded! Though ours was supposed to be a *convalescent* detachment, the doctor and his aide-de-camp, the Eurasian apothecary, had their hands full.

I, mounted on my little dun pony, the Begum, scampered at my own pace along the deep dust on either side, which makes every highroad in India, macad-

amized though it is, a perfect Rotten Row for riding. But I had to keep a sharp look-out for the varieties of baggage animals which trailed along for miles before and aft the column. There were elephants stalking along in a sedate, business-like manner, great rolls of tents towering above me on their backs, as I passed at a respectful distance from their sweeping trunks. There were strings of camels, tied head and tail, the foremost led by a 'drabby,' and with more tents swinging on their horny sides. Needless to say, I gave a wide berth to their vicious-looking heads and legs, for camels can both kick and bite. But of all the baggage-train, the strings of pack-mules, laden with the men's kit-bags, seemed to give the most trouble. Mules are cunning, and always on the look-out for mischief And then the unearthly screaming they make!

However, in spite of breakdowns, kicking off loads, and straggling, somehow or other we got over the day's march, about ten miles, ere the sun grew really high. I was not sorry to reach the rectangular grove of mango trees which Government plants to shade the camping-places on the sun-baked plains, at regular intervals on the roadside. A tiny native village of mud huts and a few mud-walled fields are the only sign of civilization. But we carry our own commissariat. In a very few minutes, as if by magic, lines of white tents have arisen in the mango shade, with straw strewn down in them. At a little distance is reared the large hospital tent, and the women's bullock-carts are packed in line, while native cooks are busy over the hastily-constructed fires and earth stoves, with which they contrive to perform such culinary wonders. In an hour or two peace reigns in the mango-grove. You

would have thought we had been encamped there for weeks. A great many siestas are going on, for it is fiercely hot out on the shimmering plain around us. Except for the shouts of circles of men seated here and there playing at 'house,' a kind of card lotto, or the slow munching of the trusses of sugar-cane in the elephants' lines, and the occasional caw of a crow overhead in the mangos, silence reigns in camp.

Our own special dressing and sitting room tent was always sent on during the night. So when I cantered in, hot and dusty with my ride, I found a hot bath, a cool dress, and breakfast awaiting me. Half-way on the march the column had halted for coffee-shop. By the roadside a native caterer had prepared a table with coffee, biscuits, and goats' cheese. When one has been marching or riding since four a.m., one is hungry! This 'coffee-

shop' is a great institution, and carries one on to half-past ten breakfast. As regards the men, this little meal, not provided for in the rations, is generally paid for out of the canteen surplus.

A few rugs, a folding table, and a couple of folding chairs, completed the furniture of our little mess-tent. The lunch basket provided the necessary plates and glasses for two, and our cook sent us up three hot meals a day, served as though we had been at home in our own bungalow. Indian domestics, each in their own department, seem to rise to emergencies in a truly marvellous way, to put up with and make shift with anything and everything. Our two waiters turned up in clean white garments and turbans, our silver badge and band on the latter, as though they had not been marching all through the night. Later in the day came on the bullock-carts with our bedroom tent, with its

folding camp-bed, and washstands, and rolls of bedding, which were all ready again for the very early 'turning in' our matutinal hours necessitated.

How soundly, and yet how lightly, one sleeps under canvas! Nowhere, except at sea, does one's sleep rest one so thoroughly. The night is warm and still, save for the bubbling and gurling of the camels, seated in a circle awaiting the dawn and the day's work, or the distant howl of a jackal or a pariah dog, or, nearer, a difference of opinion between two queer-tempered mules.

But the awakening is not all joy. It is still dark. Outside the grove, perhaps, a great bright Indian full moon is flooding the plain, or, at most, there is a faint glow of dawn to the eastwards. Outside the tent a perfect babel is beginning. There is shouting, yelling, scolding, the groaning and bubbling of camels refusing to

be loaded, or to rise when loaded, the squealing of the recalcitrant mules, a shouting of orders and expostulations. The whole grove is lurid with large fires made of the straw which formed the men's bedding.

It is bitterly cold without, too. I hear the four soldiers who are detailed to strike my tent express an opinion to that effect in choice English just outside the canvas walls of my sleeping apartment, as I endeavour to rouse myself. The patient ayah stands holding a cup of hot tea for me, and my habit is laid out on the chair, the sole remaining article of furniture, except the bed from which I reluctantly tear myself, which she has not packed up on the bullock-cart waiting without. Making a hasty toilet, I sip my tea, and mount the Begum, who is also ready, just as, at a given bugle-note, the whole canvas village falls as if by

magic. Thankful to wear a thick jacket over my cloth habit, which in itself will be unbearably hot ere the march is over, I set out, just as the column swings off down the road in the dim dawn, and the bullock-carts and baggage-beasts get slowly under way. In another hour or two its accustomed quiet will have fallen over the mango-grove. The disturbed crows will return, and the flying foxes and the owls roost once more in the branches, while, in the mud-huts of the village across the way, where an illicit *arrack* shop probably exists, the annual lucrative excitement of the advent of the 'white people' will become a memory of the past.

For a day or two our life went on like this, when an event occurred which effectually robbed it of any imputation of monotony.

On cantering into the new camping-ground one morning, some time after the

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troops had got in, I was surprised to find my own tent reared alone in its glory under the trees, and the rest ranged on the bare plain outside. A little apart from these, again, one tent stood alone.

The mystery was soon explained, and I found myself devoutly wishing that I had remained behind in the *dâk-bungalow* at Guramghur, or had sped up to Paharabad in one of the post-chaises that flashed by me as I rode along the road, doing the whole journey in some twelve hours. For the dreaded cholera, the scourge that is always with us more or less in India, had broken out in camp, and we were in quarantine. The solitary case, a slight one, has been relegated to the isolated tent I had noticed; but the troops were not allowed to encamp in the ordinary camping-ground for fear of infecting it for any others which might come after. Precaution and isolation are the only weapons with which the

cholera fiend can be effectually exorcised in India.

Henceforth the excitement every morning was to learn if any fresh victims had fallen. Fortunately, no other cases did occur at all during the march, but we did not feel ourselves secure till we reached the hills. But our arrival thither was delayed. The orders went forth from the authorities at Guramghur that we were not to enter Paharabad till a certain time had elapsed. It was most tantalizing. Every day the heat increased, and with every march the purple mountains where we fain would be rose nearer and nearer, their snowy peaks standing out sharp and rosy at dawn and sunset. It seemed a long time since we had seen a newspaper, or had any 'home' mail-letters. One felt indeed cut off from the world!

Troops never march in India on Sunday. But, even allowing for that day of rest,

there remained yet one day of the specified time hanging on our hands ere we could enter the longed-for paradise.

But the Major in command was of a sporting turn of mind. One of the officers was a real old *shikarri*, who had slain nearly every manner of wild beast India can produce, while the youngest subaltern was the proud possessor of a brand-new rifle he was burning to use. So, when we reached a certain camp, the Major decreed that a day's halt should be made and devoted to sport, for the camp was situated in the Terai, a strip of forest and marsh at the foot of the Himalayas, which is celebrated as a sportsman's paradise.

Fortune favoured us at last. Here we found encamped an official in the Forest Department, and a European engineer engaged in bridging one of those refractory rivers in the foot-hills which, every season, persistently overflow their banks

and alter their courses. From them we received the stupendous intelligence that they had news of the whereabouts of a tiger, whereat the hearts of the Major and the old *shikarri* and the bloodthirsty sub rejoiced greatly, and mine quailed not a little at the idea of such an unexpected neighbour. Not, however, that I really believed in it, any more than one does in a haunted house pointed out to one. It seemed to me extremely unlikely that a tiger should be found so near the high-road. Experience showed me, however, that I did not really appreciate how wild a jungle the Terai really is. Anyhow, I declined an offer to take part in what I imagined to be a wild-goose and not a tiger chase.

We dined pleasantly with the Forest officer in his bungalow, which was perched on stilts to escape the miasma of this most unhealthy district, and then, fortifying

myself with a dose of quinine, I went to bed. There I remained perfectly revelling in not having to rise at four a.m., and in hearing the shooting-party depart on a troop of elephants, and congratulating myself on having what is called a 'Europe morning.' Very crestfallen indeed did I become, however, when they returned at breakfast-time bearing in triumph *the* tiger, slain within a mile of camp! What a chance I had lost! What a fearful warning to sluggards was mine!

To make up for my disappointment, when the party turned out again in the evening to shoot, the Forest officer kindly offered me a seat in his howdah. This I gratefully accepted, anxious to see some sport and something of the country, and yet feeling sure that I should be unable to maintain a precarious seat on a pad, the only kind of saddle the other elephants carried. When I had last ridden an

elephant, it had been at the Zoo, and there was a ladder kept to mount it with. Apparently, they did not keep ladders in the Terai; and even when the huge beast knelt down, it towered inaccessibly above me. However, its *mahout* crooked the tip of its tail into a step for me to mount by, and, by dint of being hauled from above and pushed from below, I contrived to attain the howdah. This contained two little seats, one before the other, narrower than the narrowest pew ever dreamt of in church, and surrounded by wickerwork sides. In front of me, between the animal's ears, sat the *mahout*, and guided him with an iron spike.

We crashed through the forest and the scrub; we waded through waving seas of white elephant grass, so tall that we could only distinguish the whereabouts of the other sportsmen by the tips of their hats, the elephants being entirely hidden. We

forded torrents and streams, the great wise beast first carefully trying the depths, or the soundness of the fern-clad bank, with his trunk, or by kneeling on one knee. The verdure and the presence of water were most refreshing to our eyes, weary of the sunbaked plains. But every now and then my pleasure was somewhat damped by the fear of being bodily swept out of the howdah by the branches of forest trees, though occasionally the elephant most obligingly broke them off with his trunk.

There was no lack of game. Peafowl flew up screaming, partridges whirred past, and I was nearly deafened by the ceaseless discharge of my host's rifle in my very ear, as he let fly at the various sorts of deer which started up from under our feet. That night there was much feasting off venison in the men's tents.

Next day's march took us to the foot of the hills. The odd thing about the Himalayas is the sheer way in which they suddenly rise up from the plains. We encamped that night amid the sound of tinkling waterfalls, among fern-covered rocks, on green grass beneath the shade of trees of temperate climes. For the last time we unpacked and packed. For the last time the Major and his officers exercised their little brief authority, and in the office-tent dealt out punishments to Tommy Atkins for declining to give the mild Hindoo his just due for the fowl of the country, or for a surreptitious bottle of *arrack*, and such-like small offences. Above us towered the 'hills,' a purple mass, stretching away, fold upon fold, to China.

In the early morning the Begum and I climbed the narrow, winding mountain-path shaded with white hawthorn, red

rhododendrons, and green ilex. Pleasant to the ears of the sick men, borne upward by the toiling *doolie*-bearers, was the splash of the torrents and the cascades among the gorges, the tinkle of far-off cow-bells on upland pastures, and, sweetest of all, to English ears, the note of the *koel*, that Eastern mimic of the cuckoo.

The bullock-waggons wound their slow way up a long zigzag road, in and out of valley and mountain-side. Long before them we reached Paharabad; and here 'the spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife' once more awoke the deserted barracks perched above the precipice, while I installed myself in my mountain home among the ilex.

A STRANGE TEMPLE.

On the borders of the fern-haunted belt of swamp and jungle called the Terai, which lies at the foot of the great Himalayas, at the point where cultivation ceases and the great stretch of grass and scrub and forest begins, stands a native village. Near it lies the pretty camping-ground which, year after year, before the 'iron horse' snorted up to the very foot of the 'everlasting hills,' Tommy Atkins was each spring and autumn wont to make lively with his white tents, his gay uniform, and his lively bugle-calls, for the space of a few short hours.

I, for the time being one of the denizens of the aforementioned white tents, intent only on the excellent black buck, hare and partridge shooting with which the spot abounds, was told by my servant, an intelligent Hindoo of higher caste than usual, that there was a great *tamasha*, or show, to be seen near the camp at sun-down.

So half an hour before sunset I returned from my shooting, and asked where the *tamasha* might be.

'It is in a temple in the jungle close by,' was the reply, which sounded interesting. I decided to go and see. A guide was at hand, and him I followed. I called to some of my men to come with me, cautioning them to keep silent, and to do nothing to hurt the religious or other feelings of the natives.

After crossing two or three fields, we came to a great wall of bamboos, about a

hundred yards long and very dense. A narrow and tortuous track pierced this obstacle, and we soon emerged into an oblong quadrangle entirely surrounded by bamboos similar to those we had come through. At one end of the quadrangle stood a little Hindoo temple. It was a simply-built, whitewashed clay structure. The tall peaked roof of elephant-grass thatch was supported on old and massive teak beams, whose gables projected like gargoyles, and were curiously carved. A flight of broken stone steps led up to the temple, before which hung suspended on a crossbar a beautiful old bell of silver-bronze. Two rows of simply-built cells or cubicles occupied part of the longer sides of the courtyard. Before each cell sat a priest—naked saving the waistcloth and sacred Brahmin string—and busily engaged in cooking *chuppattees*. Not a word was said by any of the priests. The

chuppattees were not ordinary ones, but singularly thick and coarse. The blue smoke from the rows of little fires rose to the level of the topmost bamboo shafts, and there spread and hung in layers of delicate blue film, as one often sees above a cottage in English woodlands. Above the four walls of greenery glowed the sky, a firmament of gold and azure, with marblings of deeper colour; the dreamy splendour of the Indian winter's sunset—so different from the pallid sky of a hot-weather evening—shed a warm light upon the young shoots of the bamboos.

Away to the north-east the wild wooded foot-hills of the Himalayas peeped over the thicket. One tall peak of rose-tinted snow was visible through a gap in the hills, and showed where the Saada cleaves its mysterious way down from the Roof of the World to join the crawling Ganges.

The setting sun struck horizontally on the gleaming thatch of the temple. The priests sat, silent and stolid, before their fires and cakes, as if ignorant of our presence. As the last rays of sunlight died off the temple and the topmost buds of the mighty hedge round us, a man of extreme age, clad in white robes, and closely shaven, issued from the shrine. It was the chief priest. Moving slowly forward, he took up a bronze hammer and began to strike the bell.

Very sweet and deep was the note! The whole glade rung and vibrated with the sound. The bamboo feathers tossed in sympathy, and the now dusky thickets re-echoed the solemn tocsin.

At the sound all the priests arose, as if for vespers, and moved solemnly, and still in dead silence, round the quadrangle, bearing with them their huge *chuppattees*, which they broke up as they walked, and

deposited in great pieces on stones and old tree-trunks, and on the steps of the temple.

What could it all mean?

Just then a rustling sound, and a startled exclamation from a soldier behind me, made me look round. A jackal, big and plump, brushed past my leg with an upward curl of his lips, and an upward look of surprise and resentment in his red-bronze gleaming eyes!

Simultaneously, from every lane and passage in the darkening thicket, came other jackals, singly and in pairs, and even a whole litter together, and filled the space before the temple.

Soon the feast was spread. The high-priest ceased to toll the bell, and, at a shout and a wave of the hand, every jackal trotted, without rivalry, and without snarling or confusion, to what was evidently his accustomed place and feast, seized the

cake in his jaws, turned, and disappeared through the thicket.

" There was no fondling of the animals, no sign of any worship of them, no ceremonial, nothing but this silent, business-like almonry.

The rite was over, the priestly office performed, and one by one the soldiers went back to camp. In vain did I fee the priests to learn the meaning of this strange bounty. 'It had always been so,' was the answer—the best argument, the most ample *raison d'être* of anything in the East.

To the old Buddhists, all forms of life, even the most repulsive and lowly, were sacred as being possible abodes of a human soul—nay, even of the Deity Himself; and it is well known that from Buddhism the Brahmins learnt their reverence for animals—a reverence strikingly shown in the case of the Brahmini bull, the monkey, and the cobra.

Whether or no this jackal-feeding endowment is of that kind, I know not; or whether it is but the freak of some bygone Hindoo, and on a par with the parrot and cat worship of many a British spinster. Nor can I vouch for the truth of my servant's ingenious explanation that 'an old-time traveller from the snows wandered one evening from his halting-place in the village hard by, and so lost himself in the then dense jungle. While plunged in despair, he suddenly heard the distant howling of jackals, and, knowing that they usually gather at nightfall to prowl and howl round the abode of man, he made for the sound, and so regained the village, and, in gratitude, built and endowed this temple for the daily feeding "of all such indigent jackals as may come for food."' Whatever the origin of this strange custom, there it flourishes to this day.

The Hindoo priests are more honest

than those Germans to whom Walther von der Vogelweide left money for the feeding of the song-birds he loved so well. The birds at Würzburg are long since disendowed; the jackals of Rohilkund are fed every evening, and doubtless will be till the crack of doom, or the Russian avatar.

CAMP LIFE IN THE HILLS.

'When we went a-gipsying
A long time ago.'

SEVEN thousand feet above the sea, in a basin of craggy mountains covered with ilex and rhododendron, lies a deep green lake, not more than three-quarters of a mile long, and which escapes in a torrent through a gap in the hills to the south-east, and rushes, in a series of cascades, some two thousand feet down into a green valley below, and thence into the plains. By reason of this little lake, Naini Tal—the *tal*, or lake, of Naini—is unique

among Indian hill-stations. Socially it ranks next to Simla, the summer capital of the Viceroy. In 1877 Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy, made it his temporary home while Government House at Simla was rebuilding, and Naini is always the summer residence of the Government of the North-West Provinces. All round the lake, perched wherever there is room on the steep mountain-sides, stand the châlet-like bungalows of the summer visitors. Hither they fly from Allahabad, Lucknow, and the smaller stations of the North-West Provinces. A weary journey, but, oh, how gladly undertaken! First, the creeping, slow, hot, dusty Indian railways; then, in the days of which I am writing, the jolting *dâk-gharry*, with its wretched jibbing ponies; and, finally, the *dooly* up the mountain-side. A fine example of the 'rallentando' movement. If the Oude

and Rohilkund Railway is slow, what of the erratic paces of the *dâk-gharry*, and, finally, of the panting efforts of the cooly toiling under the weight of the mem-sahib in the *dooly?*

It was from Naini we started on our nomad expedition one bright morning in April. We would fain have left quite early, for T. has a perfect mania with regard to the early worm when on the march. But sufficient coolies not being forthcoming to shoulder our loads, they had to be hunted up from the squalid depths of the native bazaar, a work of time and a trial of temper, ere our impedimenta all disappeared. Our way lay along the Mall, which runs round the lake. It was already alive with early riders and with European children, taking the air, with the numerous retinue without which no white children appear to be able to dis-

pense. At the end of the lake we followed for awhile the bullock-cart road, which wound round the face of the precipice. This is not the road by which visitors ride or are carried up from the plains, but a broader and easier one by which Naini is supplied with the necessaries of life in long strings of bullock-waggons. But it is also a much longer one, and it is difficult to believe, as one stands on it at the end of the lake, looking down upon the buildings of the Naini Tal Brewery, far, far below in the green valley, that the road winds some nine miles down the hillside ere it reaches them.

Our first day's march to Ranighur was most lovely. The road resembles the famous Corniche Road in Italy. But, instead of the blue Mediterranean lying below, it is the lower spurs and the green valleys of the Himalayas that fringe the

immense panorama of plain, spread out like a map, with rivers, villages, and crops clearly defined. Immediately below the mountains, which rise so sheerly from the plains, unlike some of the older European formations, lies the Terai, a marshy jungle, celebrated for its big game shooting. After awhile, two little blue lakes, Narkuchar Tal and Beem Tal, came into view, imbedded in the mountains. The whole route, or path (for it is only practicable for ponies and foot people), lay through forests. The great beauty of the Himalayas consists of the trees with which they are clothed. In Europe, at a similar height, the vegetation is scantier, and belongs to a colder zone. Here, the principal tree is the ilex, or evergreen oak, of an olive-green shade, and intermixed with it are the stately giant deodars

and large rhododendrons, which, at this season, were just bursting into scarlet bloom. Many of the old gnarled branches of the ilex were fringed with moss and hanging ferns, presenting a fantastic, weird appearance, and recalling the German legend of the Erl - König. Ferns of various sorts carpeted the rocks — the common bracken, the oak, the silver, polypodiums, the parsley, the maidenhair.

In a warm sheltered nook of the valley we passed a tea-plantation, and, soon after, arrived at the half-way halting-place, where our servants had prepared breakfast. It was laid under a spreading tree close to a rushing torrent. Near by was the local *buniah*, or grain-seller, of whom our servants could buy food, and the *dharamsala*, or rest-house, a sort of stone stable, to which the *jampan*-bearers betook themselves.

Presently the thirty-five coolies trooped in by twos and threes, as we had overtaken most of them *en route*. They were enveloped in coarse brown blankets, and wore their matted hair bare, or, at most, covered with a small cotton skull-cap, which had once been white. The difference between the hillmen and the dwellers in the plains is very marked. Owing to the difference of climate, the former are more clothed than the latter, though their garments, not to descend to unsavoury details, are not of the snowy whiteness of those of the coolies in the plains. The *paharis* only wash once a year, upon their holiest festival. In the plains bathing ranks next, if not before, godliness. But the hillmen have legs, legs like an Englishman, not the attenuated spindleshanks of their brethren from below. In temperament also they

do not resemble the solemn, languid inhabitants of the plains. Their faces are round and jolly, with bright eyes and grinning mouths. Some of the young women are handsome, with clear-cut features; but their looks soon vanish under the hard life they lead. Both sexes keenly relish a joke, and it is almost impossible to prevent the *jampan*-bearers from laughing and talking as they trot along with you. Yet, with all this outward geniality, they are the most trying class of Indian servants to manage—they are scheming, crafty, indolent, and impudent, and are notorious thieves. At a hill-station, each lady dresses her *jampanees* in a distinctive style or colour, for the sake of speedy recognition in the crowd, when, at the close of an entertainment, the *jampans* are called up. The result is great brightness at any outdoor gathering.

According to the weight of the person to be carried, four to eight *jampanees* are required. The whole of this trip I performed carried in a sort of arm-chair on a pole, and at first could not get over the feeling of being an animated Guy Fawkes. There are many shapes of *jampans* and 'dandies.' M. travelled in a *dooly*, in which she also slept, like a crib with the feet cut off and slung on a pole.

When we had finished our breakfast, a substantial meal, cooked in the open by our old *bawachi*, our servants ate theirs, each caste apart. We had been obliged to give them money to provide themselves with warm clothes to supplement their calico garments in the hills. They had supplied themselves with sort of dressing-gowns of French-gray *puttoo*, made of the finest hair of the Kashmir goat, and embroidered in black—garments

of which one felt really envious. But the table-attendant, or waiter, had cut down a shepherd's plaid suit of T.'s into a coat and the elongated breeches they all wear, adding patent-leather gaiters over his bare feet.

After breakfast, though our way still lay over forest-clad mountains, it grew hot. As we reached the summit of a small pass, on the further side of which lay our camping-ground, the snow range came for the first time into view. There they stood—the huge white masses and peaks of every shape, chiselled out between the deep verdure of the forest and the brilliant blue of the sky.

We chose as our camping-ground a fallow terrace-field, almost at the bottom of the valley, some way beyond the *dâk-bungalow*. Here, as the coolies carrying them dropped in, we pitched our four tents. The largest was a double-roofed

Swiss cottage tent, eighteen feet by twelve feet, with a veranda in front, where we dined. Inside it was lined with a fleur-de-lis-patterned canvas of a warm orange shade; and when the carpets were spread, the camp-beds, tables, and chairs put up, it presented a very cosy appearance. M. occupied a *shuldaree*, or square two-poled tent, also double-roofed. A single-roofed cooking-tent for the servants and T.'s tiny English canoeing-tent completed our camp. When struck, the whole of it, including poles and double roofs, could be carried by six coolies. We had seven servants with us—a *khansamah*, who did the catering and cooking; two table attendants, or *kitmutghars*, an ayah, a washerman, a water-carrier, a sweeper, and a groom.

We dined in the veranda, by the light of a large full-moon above, which almost

eclipsed the feeble light of our candles, and then, tired out, we went to bed and to sleep, lulled by the millions of crickets, much more abundant and noisy than in Europe. One fearful species lives in trees only, and makes such a deafening noise one can hardly hear one's self speak as one passes near. A policeman's rattle is a joke to it.

All too soon, one sleeps so soundly under canvas, the unwelcome news sounded in our ears, telling us the coolies had come. A hasty cup of chocolate in bed, and a still hastier toilet, amid a hammering of tent-pegs and a crash of falling canvas. The loads being bestowed upon the unwilling backs of their bearers, we sallied forth in the gray morning light. But, however unpleasant the process may be, it is wise thus to get over the march and arrive at the new camp before the

heat of the day. For even in these high valleys the Indian sun is hot, and beats down with fury in the middle of the day. Thus we ascended a narrow rocky gorge,

> 'Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
> To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.'

At the entrance to the ravine were some dilapidated buildings, once smelting works, for the mountains on either hand teem with iron ore, and the quantity of good building stone available gives an appearance of solidity to the huts even of the peasants, which is remarkable to eyes long accustomed to the mud or plaster erections in the plains. Our route was very different in character to that of the day before. Instead of shady forest, we traversed arid brown mountain-tops covered with sparse herbage, and rocky gorges filled with foaming torrents. We

encamped for the night on a hillside high above the *dâk-bungalow*, a magnificent panorama of fold upon fold of purple mountain stretching away before us to where, wrapped in haze, lay the snows. The weariest part of the day's march is undoubtedly the end of it, when one waits, hot and hungry, at the camping-ground in the burning sun, for the tardy coolies with tents and baggage, and sighing for shade, food, and a bath.

The third day's march from Naini Tal brought us to Almora. A road splendidly engineered through a grand gorge, with a foot suspension-bridge thrown across the junction of two torrents, leads across bare brown rocky hills to the curious stump of a mountain on which Almora stands. Its position has been likened to Gibraltar. The rock is almost treeless, and the reflected heat as we toiled up the winding

road was nearly unbearable. The beautiful scenery, spread like a map around us, was unheeded, and we thought only of finding a camping-place—no easy matter. We passed several European bungalows with flowery compounds, for Almora is the head-quarters of two Goorkha regiments. We made a circuit round the native city, and, pausing at the post-office, were refreshed by a budget of home letters. At length T. spied, as he imagined, a suitable camping-ground on a hill at the extreme end of the station, where the rock joined the mainland, so to speak, of mountains. So up we toiled, a weary procession of *jampans*, servants, and coolies. Bitter, then, was our disappointment at finding the place given over to native travellers and Ladâkh merchants, and in an impossible state of filth. We retraced our steps, therefore, and finally found a better

spot upon a sort of promontory jutting out below the fort which crowns the summit of the rock, and adjoining the native bazaar, and shaded, moreover, by a few trees. Scarcely had the first tent arisen, however, than an irate pedagogue appeared, and informed us we had pitched upon his school place. Possession being nine points of the law, however, especially in the case of a sahib, he retired some fifty yards off under a wall, where his scholars all squatted in a row and commenced reading all together, keeping time to the sing-song drawl by a monotonous waving to and fro of their bodies.

Almora is more an important native city than a European station. The English society, such as it is, is composed of a few civil officers and the officers of the Goorkha regiments, which are never changed. But Almora is the seat of the Government

of Kumaon, and the Commissioner has a charming bungalow in the vicinity. Life, however, is just a trifle stagnant. The chief amusement is playing badminton in the racket court. The so-called library boasted only one newspaper, and that three days old, while in the Goorkha mess there was no newspaper at all. Outside news—and the Eastern Question was hot just then—troubled not Almora. The regiments never left the station except on active service, and one of the officers had lived there thirty years!

On Sunday we went to church, a neat little edifice, where the Colonel of Goorkhas read prayers. There was one European shop in the place, kept by a Parsee.

Native Almora is more interesting. Bishop Heber, who visited it in his episcopal peregrinations, said it reminded him of Chester. The long native bazaar

climbing up the steep hill to the fort is most picturesque, and full of life and bustle. The houses, mostly two-storied, resembled Swiss châlets, for they had wooden or red-tiled roofs, and quaint carved balconies, with Moorish-looking arches, through the trellis-work of which glanced down the night-black eyes of their concealed inmates. No respectable Mahommedan or Hindu woman of the upper classes is ever seen abroad. Even the poorer women in the plains conceal their faces at the approach of a man. But their hill sisters have no such scruples. Like most women of mountainous countries, they are extremely active and hardy, sharing in the field work and bearing heavy burdens. Instead of the long tight trousers of the women below, they wear several gay cotton petticoats, gracefully tucked up like a fish-wife's, and extremely short

bodices, which, making no pretence of reaching to the waist, leave a broad natural belt of bare brown skin. These bodices are of a peculiar cut, with a sort of full stomacher, always of a different material to the rest of the bodice. In the shape of a necklace of rupees, and large square engraved amulets of silver, the richer wear their whole fortune on their person, while nearly every woman one meets jingles with nose and ear rings, armlets and anklets. But these are not always of silver. The nose-ring is sometimes so large it has to be removed for eating, and, I believe, answers somewhat to our wedding-ring.

The bazaar was broad, well paved, and clean, but so steep that occasionally there were flights of steps. The crowd that thronged it was motley and noisy. The high-caste Brahmin with close-cropped head and classical features, and something

of a Roman air in the fold of his white garment and his haughty mien, was jostled by the uncouth-looking Ladâkh trader from Thibet, with filthy clothes and unkempt hanging locks. The coolie, the tiller of the soil, wrapped only in his canvas blanket, lounged in front of the counter of the Parsee shopkeeper—English-speaking—in black frock-coat, tall fez, or velvet cap. That social pariah, the *mehter*, his turban all twisted anyhow, shuffled with downcast mien among a group of fat, sleek, Bengali *baboos* in voluminous snowy raiment, returning from the Government offices where they are clerks. Squatting on his haunches, loudly soliciting alms, the Hindu *fakhir*, with distraught features, devotee and beggar, makes up his lack of clothing by the frightful red and white tattooing of his face and body. From the fort above, the noisy little Goorkha soldier, in his Rifle-green uniform,

a black forage cap cocked on one side of his monkey-like little head, swaggers whistling down the middle of the street, his Chinese eyes twinkling. The Goorkhas are the flower of our native infantry, and have always been to the front when a war is on. These cheery little warriors are of a Tartar race, and, like the Nepaulese, descendants of a former conquering people in India.

The bazaar is lined with shops of every description. These are mere sheds open to the street, with the wares spread on the floor, and the seller squatting on a carpet behind. The *bunniah*, or grain-seller, exposes samples of cereals in baskets, and piles of native sweetmeats in trays. The shop is scarcely approachable for the swarms of flies, yet it is there perforce that even Europeans must get the sugar, rice, flour, potatoes, etc., for daily use. The cloth-merchant's little den is gay with

Manchester goods on shelves on the wall, and with native cottons and muslins of the loveliest hues. On inspection, these Manchester goods appear very inferior, and the heavy dressing comes out in the first wash. No wonder that the cotton factories lately started by Europeans in various parts of India are doing well. The cloth-merchant also sells Kashmir cloths, *puttoo* and *pushmina*, and gay turbans and waist-cloths. Several shops exhibit only the women's gay bodices, hanging on lines and looking like dolls'-clothes, they are so short. A picturesque-looking shed is that of the ironmonger, with piles of bright brass basins and cooking-pots. Some shops are devoted only to 'hookah' pipes, of every size and colour, in coarse red pottery, the latter sort ornamented with smart braid and tassels. In front of his small portable furnace, the silversmith sits hammering

away at a heavy anklet, a tray of dubious precious stones spread out to tempt the unwary sahib. At the cloth-merchant's, the tailors stitch solemnly from left to right, the wrong way, as we deem it, holding their work in their toes! One special peculiarity of Almora was the number of kite shops. Kite-flying is a favourite amusement with the adult Hindu, who practises it solemnly in the evening, from the flat roof of his domicile, surrounded by an admiring audience.

Among the medley, the arm of the law, in the shape of a shambling, blue-bloused, yellow-turbaned 'bobby,' lolled about by way of keeping order. But he was generally engaged in conversation upon the absorbing subject of *pice*, or else occupied himself in pursuing small boys with his stick. The Hindu *gamin* is quite as sharp as the gossoon of the Emerald Isle, or the Arab of Cheapside; but he stops

suddenly short in intellectual development, and grows no wiser. In the crowded bazaar the children of every age, size, and state of nakedness and dirt, from little brown bundles astride on their mothers' hips, upwards, fill up the interstices of the throng. But there comes a break in the long line of wooden châlets. A handsome stone building with a portico stands in strange contrast in the middle of the bazaar, and through an open doorway we see schoolrooms and more children—children reclaimed, kempt, and cleaned. It is the establishment of the London Missionary Society, built twenty-five years ago. Next door is the mission chapel.

Our stay at Almora extended over four or five days, longer than we liked or intended. But the coolies we had brought from Naini Tal would not go with us any further. It was now necessary to engage a Government *chupprassee*, or sort of

messenger, who would have authority to requisition fresh ones at every march. This official asked for a few days to collect the first contingent, and we were obliged to await his pleasure. He was a sulky-looking Jack-in-office, none too civil or pleased with the job. But we should be helpless further on the march without him. A further cause of delay were repeated thunderstorms which drenched our tents, making it impossible to carry them. But even these thunderstorms had their compensation. When the clouds rolled over, the view of the snows where we sat, like Abraham, at the door of our tent, and watched

'Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!'

was indeed glorious.

We left Almora early on April 30, and we should have left earlier still, but for the faithless *chupprassee* who should have

been our 'guide, philosopher, and friend.' Having put off our start a few days to suit this functionary's convenience, it was naturally irritating, when we were all up and ready to be off, to find he had not yet put in an appearance, and that the coolies were only dribbling in sulkily by twos and threes. T. made a raid into the bazaar, and there he found our friend sleeping the sleep of the just, or otherwise. As he was our servant for the time being at five rupees a month, surely here was a legitimate opportunity for a thrashing! And here let me put in a word upon the subject of the castigation of servants, a burning question in many an Anglo-Indian household. Beating servants is dying out as a habitual practice, and is now chiefly confined to hot-headed young fellows not long in the country, who, not understanding the language, are perpetually at loggerheads with their domestics. A good indoor

servant will not be beaten, and you cannot get a good stamp if it is known to be your habit. So it doesn't pay. It is best to get rid of one that requires beating upon the spot. Punkah coolies who go to sleep on hot nights when at work, thereby spoiling your precarious rest, or grooms who wilfully neglect or are cruel to your horses—well, such are outside the pale of mercy. As Rudyard Kipling sings:

'Tara Chand is the *Malli's* (gardener's) mate,
And labours late and early,
But Dunni is my pony's *syce* (groom)
And steals the golden barley.
Golden barley, roses red,
Rejoice in your morning's beauty,
For I have broken Tara's head,
And given Dunni *chuti* (dismissal).'

But to return to our *chupprassee*, who was the bane of our trip, though without him, as a Government servant, having power to requisition food and coolies, we could not have got on at all. But the man was

idle, stupid, and thoroughly enraging. On this occasion T. refrained from chastisement, though he found that the man had made no arrangements at all during the time we had given him, but himself collected out of the streets a file of hardy, merry, be-kirtled hill-women, with black eyes and red cheeks, who shouldered our burdens—womanfully. Never on any subsequent march were the loads better carried. The women positively cackled as they strode along, another instance, if one were required, of the inability of the sex to get on without talking.

For a time our march lay along the bullock-cart road between Almora and Ranikhet, a hill-station for English troops about thirty miles further along the hills. This was a real road. Elsewhere, even when describing the approach to Almora over the suspension-bridge, be it well understood that I mean by road, in the

Himalayas, a mere path about six feet wide, carried along the sheer hillsides (and they are sheer in this youngest of mountain formations), often on artificial stonework, and with absolutely no protection on the *kud*, or precipice, side. They are, of course, only practicable for ponies and *jampans*, or mules. A string of these, driven single-file by a man in the rear, and heavily laden with bales of merchandise, have one by one to be pushed bodily up against the rocky wall, ere the traveller coming in the opposite direction can pass.

Against the deep-blue sky, backed by the sharp outline of the snow range, stood an obelisk, erected to the memory of some English officers killed at the taking of Almora early in this century, when we were cohering our Indian Empire. Further on we passed under a fine solitary tree, called, I know not why, the Hangman's Tree,

and here our path diverged from the cart-road and lay over cultivated hills and through tea-plantations. The march was a short one, about eight miles only, and we reached our halting-place, Hawalbagh, early.

On a knoll in a pleasant valley, surrounded by pine-trees, and overlooking a steep ravine, stood the Government rest-house, empty indeed, but soon made habitable by our camp furniture and carpets. We spent the afternoon fishing unsuccessfully for *marseer* under the suspension-bridge, and bathing in the pool. Hawalbagh was one of the pleasantest camping-grounds we found, and we regretted afterwards that we had not stayed there longer. But next morning we had a beautiful May-day journey through fragrant deodar forests and broad valleys ripe with golden corn, a very English-looking country—green meadows and running

brooks, the latter every now and then spanned by the quaintest little mills, like toy houses. These and the gay fritillaries and other rare butterflies hovering about, and the scarlet and black rajah-birds, sufficed, however, to dispel any illusion of 'home.'

We camped high on a deodar-covered ridge, with a splendid panorama both before and behind; but it was so narrow that there was barely room to stretch the tent-ropes, while the herbage was so slippery and the descent so steep on either side that I feared lest M. should lose her footing as she trotted from tent to tent, and slide down into the pine depths below. While in this exposed and precarious position, our beautiful May-day suddenly came to a tempestuous close. As we sat at dinner a thunderstorm, which we had watched for some time gathering in the north, burst upon us with terrific fury. Happily, our

tents had been well pitched, and the iron pegs were strong. But every moment we expected them to be torn up by the tempest and hurled down the cliff. The storm raged for some hours, accompanied by pouring rain; but at length the night grew quiet, and broken only by the laughing of a hyena prowling near. These repeated storms were beginning to seriously affect our enjoyment of our trip. The season was abnormal that year. Usually rain does not fall till June or July; but that year the little rain there was came early, both in the hills and the plains, and later on there was a famine in consequence.

Owing to the soaked condition of our tents, we could not start next day till a few hours' sunshine had dried them. There was the usual difficulty, too, about coolies. Eventually M. and I, with the most necessary baggage, started first,

leaving T. to bring up the rear with the tents and furniture when the former were portable, for at the next stage there was a rest-bungalow, where we could put up should the tents not come in. M. got ahead of me, and I had a long, dull, solitary march of no particular beauty, over a broad undulating tableland intersected by a river and fringed with curious bare rocky hills, rising abruptly. In the middle of a village through which the road passed, I found our *kitmutghars* awaiting me with lunch laid out. The day was intensely hot, and the shadow of a house the only shade procurable. So in a few minutes the villagers were treated to the unaccustomed spectacle of a mem-sahib in a solar-tope, alone, sitting in a chair, and eating tinned sausage off a table.

After leaving the village, the road ascended a chain of pine-covered hills, whence there was a good view of the

military sanatorium of Ranikhet, lying parallel to us across the hills; then over a rich tableland to Dwarahat bungalow. Scarcely had I reached it than a thunder-storm broke, and later on, quite in the dark, arrived poor T., drenched to the skin. The tents did not turn up till next day. There was nothing particularly to recommend this halting-place, or the bungalow, which was full of fleas, the scourge of these altitudes. But, *nolens volens*, here we were obliged to remain for two days till our tents were dry. Each day there was a heavy storm.

The bungalow was built at the junction of the hill route to Mussooree, the nearest important hill-station to Ranikhet, and that to Josephmat, which we were pursuing. It stood on a ridge looking towards Ranikhet on one side and up to some high mountains, across a beautifully wooded narrow valley, on the other. The after-

noons were spent sitting about on the grassy knolls near, admiring the prospect and studying the cow-boys in charge of herds of hideous black buffaloes, who beguiled their leisure with a weird kind of Pan's pipe, common to the hills, which had quite an Arcadian effect. One evening, however, we were threatened with another inmate in the bungalow, in addition to the original inhabitants mentioned above. The baggage of a sahib suddenly appeared. It transpired he was on the march to Mussooree by way of the hills. But he did not turn up during our stay. When we returned, however, some weeks later, we heard that his servants had all deserted him at this point, and that he had been obliged to continue his journey quite alone, no small hardship in a country like India, where grown-up folk are washed and dressed and waited on like children. The only other excitements which marked our

enforced delay at Dwarahat was the finding of a phosphorescent beetle one evening after the rain, a gentleman who carried his lamp in his tail, and the welcome arrival of some bread, for which we had sent in to Ranikhet, and the last we tasted for some time.

Our journey next lay up the wooded valley behind the bungalow through grand gorges. By breakfast-time we reached a junction of four valleys, where their respective streams formed a quite respectable river. We took our meal under a spreading peepul-tree, and then prepared to ford the stream. I passed over first, but the current was so strong and the water so deep—up to my bearers' waists—that it was with extreme difficulty they were able to cross, supporting themselves on their staves. M. and her ayah, being a light load, followed with ease, and then T. was borne across upon five men's shoulders,

two carrying his legs, two his shoulders, and one his head, while I sat on the bank and laughed. Our old gray-bearded Mussulman *khansaman* objected exceedingly to wading across, whether from fear of drowning or loss of dignity I cannot say. But this was the only difficulty we ever had with our servants, of whose behaviour throughout our expedition too much cannot be said. At the end of a long march, wet, tired, hungry, they always turned up willing and quick to attend to our wants. Imagine English servants roughing it in this way! What a nuisance they would have been!

The valley broadened, and the scenery became like that in Kashmir. Mountains rose wooded on either hand, but our route was low and hot, and plantain, cactus, and lemon-trees betokened a warm climate. Gay dragon-flies flitted across the little watercourses that irrigated the fields, and

I caught some rare blue swallow-tail butterflies. The reapers were at work among the crops, men and women, chiefly the latter, pulling the corn in small handfuls, and leaving untidy stubble for the cattle to eat. Further on we came upon some native smelting works. The country teems with iron ore, and wood for smelting is abundant. But the process is rude, and the small quantities of pig-iron we saw being carried down to the plains seemed inferior in quality and dear. Under English auspices, there is a good opening for iron manufacture. We passed a village where a *fakhir*, or religious mendicant, half naked and very dirty, his face daubed with red and white spots like a clown's, sat chanting his monotonous appeal for alms, and then we reached the end of our march, Rampur, as common a name in Hindu districts as Wootton in England. There was some difficulty in finding a suitable

camping-place at the City of God, as Rampur means. The regulation ground, under a large tree in the middle of the village, was too dirty to be thought of. There was hardly an uncultivated spot of level ground, and the stubble fields were all muddy with the rains. Eventually we selected a narrow terraced field just above the road, by no means comfortable or dry, and barely had we got the tents up when down came the inevitable rain. Was ever such luck as ours that year?

We made as early a start as possible from Rampur next morning, literally shaking its mud off our feet, and ascended the pass which closed in the end of the valley. Bright golden orioles flew about, and small 'widow birds' with black bodies and long white streamer tails. We met troops of peasants, gay in holiday costume, going to a *mela*, or fair. The men made the mountain-air musical with their Pan's pipes,

but the women carried the bundles and the babies, the latter mostly astride on their hips. When accompanied by his wife, the *pahari* rarely condescends to burden himself with anything but his hookah!

On the top of the pass was a fine view of the snows. On the other side, a narrow wooded ravine led to another larger valley, where, on a bridge, we crossed the river we had forded lower down the day before. Under the bridge we caught some trout, and ate them for breakfast on the narrow path above, under the shadow of a rock. As we were preparing to start again, we had a narrow escape from what might have been a nasty accident. I stepped into the *jampan* with M. in my arms. The path was very narrow indeed, and the *jampan* had been set down on a stone. Our united weight caused it to overbalance, and we fell heavily on to the rocky path, I on my shoulder, and M.

on the side of her head, scarcely six inches from the edge of the precipice. My little travelling-clock, which always went with me in the *jampan*, flew over the edge and bounded away nearly into the river in the depths below. We were only thankful we did not follow it!

Our way to Lobha lay up the valley above the river and through a fine black gorge the stream had cut. We met some snake-charmers on their way to the *mela*, with their faces painted, and the two baskets containing the snakes slung on a pole across the shoulders of one of them. The Lobha bungalow stands on grassy uplands, looking down the valley and surrounded by wild mountains. It had not been occupied for six months, but was comparatively clean, and, to our great delight, it contained a stock of old books and magazines, left by some former traveller. Just as we got in, a storm

burst, and M., the bedding and baggage, which arrived later, got very wet, though the former was in a measure protected by the waterproof top and curtains of her *dooly*.

The next day T. went out shooting before daybreak, and returned about ten o'clock, much disappointed at only having seen some barking deer. As we had been promised sport in this vicinity, this was not enlivening, especially as the day was showery. But we were cheered by the arrival of Colonel M., an old *shikari*, and a mighty hunter. He had been up to the snows at this season for six years in succession to shoot *Ovis Ammon*, or snow-sheep, but hitherto without success. What result he had this trip I cannot say. But it was his last chance, for the following May saw him on the high seas with his regiment. This meeting with an English face after our several weeks' wander-

ing was very pleasant, and Colonel M. and T. indulged in sporting talk to their hearts' content over the wood-fire we kindled on the stone hearth of the bungalow.

The weather held up next morning, and, our tents being dry, we determined to start for Kimmowlee. T. departed early to shoot his way over the mountains, and to meet us at our camping-place. Colonel M. accompanied us as far as our roads lay together. It was a raw, misty morning, and we could hardly see our way through the forest as we mounted higher and higher up the pass. The height at the summit was some eight thousand feet. The scenery was grand—rocky, dolomite-shaped peaks, and deep gorges, clothed with the scarlet mountain-ash, and the beautiful shades of spring greenery. In a slight drizzle we breakfasted at the summit at a table set in the forest on a carpet of

green leaves, in the midst of the intense silence of the gloomy jungle, while the moisture dripped from every branch. It was hardly one's ideal of a picnic!

As we descended the other side of the pass, the mist turned to rain, and we could see nothing till suddenly we came upon the camp, which was being rapidly pitched on a grassy knoll above a torrent. It began to pour, and with the utmost difficulty the baggage was got under shelter just in time. Presently arrived T., wet through, and in anything but good spirits. After some hours of the most difficult and dangerous walking over the serrated peaks I have mentioned above, he had only had one shot, and that at a *lungur* monkey! These quaint creatures, about five feet high, denizens of high latitudes in the hills, have long gray hair, which makes them resemble old men. T. had only shot one to be sent home and stuffed as

a trophy. It had a young one in its arms, and he brought the little creature into the camp to be reared. This young *lungur* was as much trouble as an infant. A cradle was arranged for it in a tin bath, but it wailed incessantly in the most piteous manner. I carried it about in my lap in the *jampan* wrapped in a shawl, while it clung to me like a baby. Poor little wretch, it lived a fortnight, but never throve! Its mother, venerable even in death, adorns our hall, an astonishment to all children who come in.

With the afternoon the torrents of rain increased, a tropical rain, in perfect sheets. It turned very cold, for the valley was a high one, and I sat shivering in my ulster. We had no camp-stove with us, no means of drying or warming anything. The cook performed his culinary operations in some mysterious manner in a hole in the ground, turning out dinners of four courses, beauti-

fully cooked. He roasted, too, somehow, over a wood-fire, with an iron spit, which he used as an alpenstock upon the march. Our tents were, indeed, perfectly waterproof. But there had not been time to dig the usual trenches round them, and to bank up the edges of the canvas with earth, so the water oozed in underneath, and soaked the ground till the carpet felt like a sponge beneath one's feet. Clothes, bedding, boots, all were damp. In despair I went to bed at three a.m., and dined there, trying to keep warm and dry. The natives told us it had been raining at Kimmowlee incessantly for a fortnight. Here was a cheerful prospect!

The next morning was fine, and we were able to take stock of our surroundings. We were in a high, wild mountain valley, covered with jungle, and at the end of it rose the snow range—not one peak, or two, or three, but a mighty wall of peaks,

and domes, and jagged ridges, running up to one overwhelming mass, Nandi Devi, 23,000 feet, the highest point in this part of the Himalayas. Below, lower white ranges graduated down till they appeared to reach the rocks and blue wooded mountains comparatively near us. One had to look well up with one's head slightly tilted back to study the topmost point. Yet we were some sixty miles from the first snows. We had only come about half-way to them from Naini Tal. Imagine a mountain-range through which it takes you three weeks to toil to the lower heights! I was never weary of sitting at the door of my little canvas home watching the snows—in the early morning, when the sun rose upon them, and they seemed quite near; in the glare of noon, when they stood out against the background of deep blue; and at evening, when all their lights and shadows, depths and hollows, were lit up

by the setting sun and dyed a delicate rose-colour. They tell us that the Himalayas are Nature's latest effort in the way of mountain-ranges. Surely they are also her *chef d'œuvre.*

T. was out and about before daybreak with his rifle all over the jungle-covered mountain-side, but with little success. The shooting in the neighbourhood was ruined by a pack of wild dogs, who were hunting all the game and making it wild. Early one morning they drove a *gerau*, a sort of red deer, almost into the very camp. T. rushed out and shot the foremost dog and the *gerau*, which proved a welcome addition to our *menu*. The jungle dog was a rare bag. The saying goes that no man ever shoots two. T. preserved its skin, which resembled that of a jackal, on the spot, by soaking it in carbolic acid and water, as he had done that of the *lungur*. In the latter case, however, he stuffed the

body with straw to keep its shape and preserve the skeleton.

On one of the highest points of the neighbouring hills, T. found a ruined native fort, and on another height an altar. The *paharis* believe every mountain-top to be the seat of a god, hence the name *devi* (god) applies to them all.

We had not been many days at Kimmowlee ere provisions began to run short. There was no *bunniah*, or grain-seller, in the little village in the valley, and our servants began to complain that they could get nothing to eat. We sent the *chupprassee* to the nearest village where such a tradesman resided, and he brought him by force and made him sell us flour, *ghee*, etc. We, ourselves, had the greatest difficulty in procuring milk, eggs, and fowls. Bread had long run out, and we lived upon *chuppatees*, or unleavened cakes, eaten by natives. We had had no potatoes for a

long time. Once we were lucky enough to get a sheep, for which we gave one rupee! It was solemnly brought in and killed, and we gave some of it to such of the servants as would eat meat. We tried baking in a small portable iron stove we had brought, with whey yeast, but the results were not successful.

The flies in this cold climate became a fearful nuisance. We could not eat a meal without a man to flick them off the table, and we could not sleep without mosquito-curtains to protect ourselves against them. There was a sort of horse-fly called *mohra*, whose sting was most painful. One of the servants was rendered quite lame by the bites of this insect on his feet. We heard afterwards that it had fairly driven two English officers out of the valley the year before. The natives covered themselves with mud made from a local earth, through which the flies could not bite. Occasionally,

we got letters by a coolie from Lobha, to which place there was a sort of Government postal arrangement. From time to time rumours reached us of the outbreak of a sort of plague, as the natives called it, in the villages round. It turned out to be typhus-fever, which ravaged several villages, one of which was entirely abandoned by its inhabitants in consequence. It seemed strange to find such a scourge in these high, lonely valleys.

The weather continued so wretched—heavy thunderstorms or drenching days—that after a week's stay at Kimmowlee, we decided to retrace our steps homewards. T. had had little sport, but had made grand additions to his butterfly collection, especially some beautiful velvety black large ones, which hovered near the stream below the camp.

The day we broke up T. started at two a.m. to shoot his way over the inter-

vening mountains. But before leaving Kimmowlee, our nearest point to the snows, I was very anxious to see something of the magnificent snow panorama he had described as visible from the surrounding summits. So I left the camp before daybreak, bound for a certain wooded ridge above the village, some nine thousand feet above the sea. My bearers carried me up to the village, just waking into life, and through the wretched groups of stone huts, dotted one above another, which composed it. The pariah dogs asleep in the pathway stirred to make way for us, and the inhabitants turned out to stare as if they had never seen a white woman before, which was probably the case. I was borne to a certain point above the village, and there ignominiously deposited, and told that I could be carried no further. Now, walking is not my strong point, and as I gazed at the wooded ridge

standing out against the gray sky, far, far above me, I misdoubted me of my powers of ever reaching it. However, selecting the least stupid of the *jampanees* as guide, and arming myself with T.'s iron-shod staff, I ascended. For awhile all was easy, except the steepness, for we followed a tiny goat-track. This, however, gradually grew faint and fainter up the slippery grass slopes, bristling with rocks, which would have not been pleasant walking for anyone with a weak head. At last all vestige of a path disappeared, and I went up the sheer face of the rocks, clinging to the end of the *jampanee's* stick and to such occasional bushes as came in my way. My delight may be imagined when this mode of progression ceased, and, round the corner of a boulder, we came upon a welcome little track leading round a thickly wooded sort of bay in the mountain-side. This brought us to the lower point of

the ridge, and, doubling back, we had a laborious struggle up the ridge itself. Breathless, I flung myself down under a tree, and took in the scene before me. The snow range encircled me on three sides. Every conceivable shape of mountain was there, forming a pure white wall. On my left was a singular mass, exactly like some titanic square white fort, with a turret at each angle. Thither as my eyes roved round exploring the heights and recesses of the range, they returned as if fascinated.

Then, suddenly, on my right the sun began to rise. My old friend, Nandi Devi, the monarch of these mountains, so well studied from my tent door, in its green frame of our wooded valley, caught the flush first. Then it spread from Nepal on the right to Cashmere, maybe, on the extreme left—

'O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,'

till the whole vast semicircle blushed, glowed, and finally glittered as in a glorious transformation scene. Talk of a Rigi sunrise! Here was indeed something worth getting up at four a.m. to witness! I lay under the tree, drinking the unearthly, indescribable beauty of the scene, impressed with the same sweet, solemn, pure sadness which good music brings over one, or the looking on a beautiful picture, and involuntarily echoing Byron's words, though the quotation was, I fear, lost upon my solitary companion :

'To me
High mountains are a feeling.'

And then, at last, the sun glinted the boughs overhead. I tore myself away, bade adieu to the sweet snows such as I shall never see again, and, with far greater rapidity than I had ascended, made my way back to the valley.

Every vestige of our camp had disap-

peared. The spot where our little white home had been was given over to prowling villagers and pariah dogs, seeking what they might devour, and I followed M. and our retinue up the pass. This return journey on such a lovely morning, winding up through the leafy forest, backwards, as *jampanees* fain carry one up a steep, and thus enabled to catch glimpses of the snow and the blue among the feathery deodars, was very different to my dismal descent in the drizzle. A Himalayan forest is a wealth of leafiness and mossiness and ferns, and alive with the notes of queer birds. The pheasant and the partridge call 'Chickaw! chickaw!' From the depths of the gorge the bell-bird booms its cuckoo-like note. A bright-green stream of paraquets flashes shrieking by; the hoopoe croaks monotonously, and the ringdoves mourn. There was one bird, I do not know its name, whose

song, the first four notes of a well-known tune, positively haunted me. Then there is the brain-fever bird, with its shriek of three notes rising higher and higher up the gamut, till it ends in an agonizing scream, and the pewit, with its 'Did he do it? did he do it?' And the hill-mina, with its very human voice, mocks them all.

I found M. and T. awaiting me with breakfast at the same spot where we had halted at our ascent. Lobha seemed luxurious and quite populous, after the wild scenes we had just left. We pitched on the shingly beach of the river beneath the road, and stayed at Lobha two days, bathing and fishing. It had its drawbacks, however. Across the river was a rest-house much frequented by pilgrims to the holy shrine of Bidranath, the road to which diverged at this point from ours to Kimmowlee. These gangs of pilgrims

were a nuisance, for the flies collected about them and infested us, too. We were, indeed, experiencing on this trip the attacks of every insect which preys on human flesh. For far worse than the *mohra* fly were the human ticks we came upon here, a loathsome creature which, burying itself deep in the flesh, makes quite a painful wound.

We also suffered from a dearth of milk at Lobha, being tantalized by the herds of cows which came down to drink at the river, while the villagers refused to supply us. So T. collared the headman of the village, and tied him up with a rope to a tree for a time, which had the desired effect. How different is marching in Cashmere, where the natives are delighted to welcome the Sahib, pressing all kinds of eatables for sale on him, to here, in Kumaon, where the population is boorish and unfriendly, and the European

unpopular! Our Government *chupprassee*, in duty bound to assist us, was sullen and lazy.

When we arrived at Lobha, our stores were at a low ebb. We were getting very tired of *chuppattees*, and vegetables, of course, we had not tasted since we left Almora. Just think of our surprise and delight as we sat, like Abraham, at the door of the tent in the heat of the day, at seeing a native servant approach with a *dallee*, 'with his master's salaam'! How grateful to our eyes was the familiar basket of vegetables, with the long unseen cauliflower and lettuce! We assailed the messenger with inquiries as to the mysterious donor, for as we glanced round the thickly-wooded mountains that encircled the valley we caught no sign of any European habitation. The *dallee* turned out to be a present from a tea-planter in the neighbourhood, and next

day our unknown benefactor followed it up with a leg of mutton, home-fed and delicious, and T. went up to his lonely bungalow to call upon him and tender our thanks.

On our return journey we passed by Rampur and our muddy camp, and went on to Kunais, at the junction of two valleys, where we stayed two nights. It was very hot. Our tents were pitched on a flat grass field in the broad valley opposite the rest-bungalow, and close to the river, which here swept diagonally across the valley. The bungalow was perched most picturesquely on a high precipitous rock overhanging the stream under the hill. At its foot nestled a little village, and a suspension-bridge leading across the river to it gave a fortified air to the whole place. Near to our camp was the pilgrims' rest-house, kept by a funny old Goorkha dame, evidently a person of some consideration.

She came up and offered me a cup of milk when we arrived, trying to persuade us to pitch close to her abode. But the pilgrims were too much for us, and we preferred even the shadeless field.

Just before reaching Kunais, where the road ran between fields, we saw what we imagined to be the tail of a large snake wriggling in the hedge. T. sent for his gun and fired at it. But, upon investigating the hedge, the animal proved to be no snake, but a species of monster lizard, called a *gua-samp*. It measured five feet from the tip of its snout to that of its tail, and resembled a lizard in shape and colour. It had a forked tongue and fangs, and, I believe, its bite is fatal. These horrible-looking creatures are comparatively rare. Only one or two of our retinue had ever seen one; but I have since heard that they are found in tiger-jungles.

The heat at Kunais was intense. Under canvas the heat in some of these broad, low valleys is almost as great as in the plains, and we thoroughly enjoyed the bathing in the icy, rushing river. On our way back to Dwarahat, we found the valley snowy with great clumps of English-like dog-roses and jasmine, which had blossomed since we had passed up. We encamped on a grassy hill above the bungalow, and next day, leaving the Almora road on our left, diverged to Ranikhet.

A short distance further we came in a rocky defile upon a Hindu temple of great sanctity on a rock in the very middle of the gorge. Chandeshwar is a famous halting-place for the Bidranath pilgrims, and, from the central and commanding position of the temple, the priests can levy contributions upon them, after the manner of the robber barons on the Rhine.

In the shrines of the temple are curious rudely sculptured markings, not unlike some found on rocks in Great Britain, and which have been thoroughly investigated by Mr. Rivett-Carnac, an enthusiastic Indian antiquary.

The rock-cuttings are of different sizes, varying from six inches to one inch and a half in diameter, and in depth from one inch to half an inch. They occur in lines with many changes, and Mr. Carnac has come to the conclusion that they are an ancient form of writing, like the runes in Scotland and Ireland. They exactly resemble some rock-markings in the county Fermanagh. This identity between Indian and British symbols, if it can be established, cannot be accidental. It must be remembered that in Scotland we find elephants carved on stone. The arrangement, too, of Stonehenge points to 'lingam' worship, still very prevalent in

India. These investigations seem to open a great field of research in ethnology, studied by the light of comparative archæology.

The road to Ranikhet lies over a most curious formation of perfectly arid dark-brown rocks, graduating down to the bed of a considerable river. Crossing this, it ascends the lofty wooded mountain on which the sanatorium of Ranikhet has been planted. We pitched on a grassy knoll among the deodars behind the *dâk-bungalow* near the cart-road to Almora. We were not sorry to get back to civilization, to bread, potatoes, and soda-water, and the cheery sound of the British bugle. Only those who have really roughed it can appreciate the comforts of a house, or thoroughly pity the poor Israelites for their forty years' dwelling in tabernacles!

Ranikhet is a large straggling station, with a garrison of a regiment and a half of

British troops, and the summer residence of the General Commanding the Rohilkund Division, who with his staff moves up from Bareilly. Among the pine-woods on the undulating plateau at the top of the mountain are scattered the barracks and the bungalows. A parade-ground has been levelled, where troops are drilled and polo played. This plateau runs for three miles east and west, commanding splendid views of the 'snows' over the Dwarahat and Kunais valleys, and south to the Naini Tal hills and the plains beyond. The cart-road from Almora winds about among the knolls and the tarns and the pines, so that a light two-wheeled cart can safely be driven about the place, a unique characteristic of this hill-station. We were as pleased with Ranikhet as we were disappointed with Almora. The pine-woods are beautiful and shady, the air scented and bracing. It is hotter than Naini Tal,

which lies higher, but it is cooler and higher than Almora. At Ranikhet are the Fitzwigram Barracks, a munificent gift of the well-known General of that name, on his leaving India, to the families of cavalry soldiers, some of whom are annually brought up from the plains to summer in this cool climate.

We started for Naini on June 1, our month of gipsying over, and halted for the night at the Kura bungalow, a favourite resort of honeymooning couples, perched high above the junction of two rivers in a rocky gorge. The waters were swollen and discoloured with the recent rains, and kept up a deafening roar, but we got some delicious *marseer*, a kind of river salmon, for dinner. Next day we marched in a drizzle and mist over the pass through a dense forest, brilliant with scarlet rhododendrons and pink azaleas, and alive with bounding troops of great gray *lungurs*.

We ate our breakfast under umbrellas, and when we reached the summit and peered over the edge of the Naini basin, the lake and valley were wrapped in a sea of fog, and we were not sorry to find ourselves once more under the shelter of our own roof.

IN A TEA-GARDEN.

In good sooth it is the place, though thousands of miles from Rosherville, to spend a happy day! A broad green valley, encircled with fold upon fold of ilex, rhododendron, and deodar clad mountains, above which again, in the clearness of the dawn before sunrise, or when the sunset opposite dyes them with a fictitious blush, rise majestic and inaccessible a row of pale ghosts—the snows. Only the river knows their secret, but reveals it not, as it swirls and brawls along in its rocky bed, among the pastures, the maize crops, and the marshy wastes, past the rest-house at the ford, where the pilgrims congregate on

their way up to the holy shrine at Bidranath, where the Ganges has its birth. A village of mud hovels has arisen round the rest-house to prey upon the prayerful, and herds of lean kine wander down to the banks to drink morning and evening. But there is no sign of the tea-garden.

Above the terraced slopes where the ryot scratches a fertile soil, behind a wood which hides it from the valley, the planter's bungalow stands on a grassy upland. The trees that dot the sward, the grazing cows, the gray boulders that rise on every knoll, give the look of a Scotch shooting lodge to the scene. But yonder mountain across the valley in front is 10,000 feet high, and then—the snows at sunset! Further, all around the bungalow, on every sloping hillside, stretch carefully cultivated slopes and terraces, covered with rows upon rows of small dark-green bushes. This is the tea-garden.

Inside the veranda of the bungalow, gratefully cool even at this altitude, where the sun strikes hot at noon, geraniums, hardy English annuals, and carefully-tended pots of violets, welcome one with the indescribably delicious sight and scent of 'home.' But for six months of the year the planter has no time for *heimweh*. All the season long he must be at work, Argus-eyed, superintending his coolies. For there is no putting your trust in the mild Hindu. Indolence and peculation are inherent in the race. The planter is the only European on the estate. Away across the hills, on the slopes of another southerly valley, are his nearest neighbours in another plantation ; for there are several things to be considered in laying out a tea-garden—a good aspect, a neighbouring forest to supply the fuel for cooking. But, once planted, the shrubs are long-lived. The tea-plant has been cultivated in India

for over a quarter of a century, and the bushes show no signs of age. Up here, high above the Lobha ford, the owner lived unmolested, picking, sifting, and despatching, while down in the plains below half India was wrapt in the conflagration of the great rebellion.

By many names men call them; yet there is but one tea-plant. It is only the siftings that bear diverse nomenclature, and it is upon the season chiefly that depends the quality of the article so differently priced across an English counter.

Scattered about the slopes, in attitudes unconsciously reminding one of Leech's pictures in *Punch* of 'Common objects on the seashore,' are brown coolies of every age and of both sexes, picking the leaves and throwing them into baskets. From March till October the work never ceases. But it is 'the leaf which perished in the green,' the green, succulent early shoots, plucked

as soon as they appear, which are most prized. A back-breaking work for threepence a day indeed for the coolies, not to mention the *jemedar*, stern and lynx-eyed, who watched over his flock scattered upon the mountains. A cast-iron vertebræ with a hinge in it, like a two-foot rule, would be an advantage. In the course of centuries, perhaps, the tea-picking cooly may evolve this.

But in spite of the abundance of labour power, in the shape of the brown cooly, clad in his dirty loin-cloth, and eating in his dog-kennel but a handful of forage a day, and notwithstanding that wage of threepence, which goes farther among the Kumaon mountains than across an English tavern-bar, the planter grumbles. The bushes need manuring and carefully pruning. The absence of warm rain deteriorates the crop. No little capital has to be thrown into the ground ere the

season's harvest of ten thousand pounds' weight of tea can go forth to the world, valued at one rupee a pound. For all his proud position of landed proprietor, of despot over his cringing coolies, the owner makes perhaps no more than five hundred a year for his six months' toil.

A long low building near the bungalow is the *sanctum sanctorum* of the garden; it is the drying shed. The presiding deity of the spot is the quaintest old Chinaman, who might have been sent direct from Liberty's, or have walked out of a willow-pattern plate. The representative of the oldest civilization of the world, imported when the garden was first laid out from the far-away land of puppy-dog pies, pagodas, and pigeon-English, is part and parcel of the estate. Yet, when he dies, the coffin which he keeps ready in his little hovel of a home will be returned to the Celestial Empire, and not returned

empty. In the meantime, he delights to do the honours of his drying-sheds, and to press upon any stray visitor his delicious ground-nuts, raised from seeds he brought with him.

John makes green tea. The very name raises a nightmare of dyspepsia, a horrible vision of slow poisoning. In the 'great Anna's' reign, when to 'take tea' was exceeding 'smart' socially, our ancestors took it green. A later generation held up its hands in horror, and green tea shared the obloquy the colour casts on eyes, complexions, precious stones, seas, and youths. Whatever may be the secret machinations of John Chinaman in Flowery Land, here, on the Himalayan slopes, nothing detrimental conduces to the verdure of green tea. No deleterious chemical imparts the hue, and the most inveterate teetotaler may take heart o' grace. It is entirely to the extra cook-

ing the leaf receives that it owes its colour, and the additional trouble and time taken in its preparation alone renders it the superior and more expensive article.

Listen to the process. Tea that is intended to be green is brought in from the gardens and laid out in large flat bamboo baskets, made upon the premises, to dry. Twenty-four hours later it is placed in huge iron caldrons over a wood-fire and slowly cooked. The leaves shrivel up and turn black. Then it is laid out sparsely on a table and rolled about and kneaded by hand, and even sometimes—mention it not at the five o'clock tea-tables of Mayfair—by foot.

It is then put out again in the sun to dry. During each process the leaves become crisper and blacker, and more like tea-leaves. A second cooking in the iron pans is then administered, and yet another

drying in the sun. Finally, in the case of green tea, it is cooked a third time, but lightly, and in small quantities, to give it the much-maligned green 'facing.' Black tea goes through rather a different process, being first rolled out, cooked only once, dried in the sun, which turns it reddish, and finally dried in baskets over a charcoal fire.

It is in the sifting that both kinds of tea acquire their names. This is done in baskets, and in a kind of winnowing-machine. The very coarse tea remaining after the first sifting is Bohea, and the second quality is Souchong. Pekoe dust is one of the finest kinds, and highly in favour in the Indian market. Flowery Pekoe is the very young shoot, with a slight down upon it, such as one sees upon the acacia flower in England. But this down is not the real flower of the bush. The term 'facing' merely means cooking.

Tea-making, on the whole, is a cleanly process, and, as for the foot question, how about a vintage in Europe?

Immediately after the siftings, the various teas are packed in the square zinc-lined, gaily-painted boxes familiar to us all from childhood. Then these are carried off, on ponies or coolies' backs, to the various markets. The green tea goes chiefly north and west, being patronized largely by Cabul and Ladakh traders, who carry it over the frontier. The black tea is steadily making its way in the English market against the China teas. And we, in duty bound, ought to consume it. The value of tea is in its freshness. It is a far cry to China. Let us buy our Himalayan teas fresh almost, from their native mountains. A very few days suffice from first to last, from the picking of the leaf to the packing of the sifted article, and but a few weeks now separate

us from India. The slopes of the Himalayas are a better residence as regards climate than the east of Africa or the centre of Canada. The rail now, in several places, touches the foot of the great range. The English emigrant with some capital can make himself a pleasant home at the height of a few thousand feet. The little tea-shrubs only yield their harvest half the year, and when the drying-sheds are empty, there are deer and gooral, burrhel, and perhaps bears, to be shot among the high crags above, and *marseer* to be tempted with a fly, below, in the pools of the stream at the pilgrims' ford.

UP IN CLOUD-CUCKOO LAND.

'How beautiful is the rain!'

LONGFELLOW.

THE reign of Jupiter Pluvius is upon us. After her long winter sleep beautiful Naini, on her 'throne of rocks, in her robe of clouds,' doffs her 'diadem of snow,' and awakes to a short, sweet spring, England-like but for the glory of the rosy rhododendrons dyeing her hill-sides. They drooped and fell under the hot May sun, whose fierce despotism extends even up here. But before this verdant upland nook had time to lose all its fresh greenness, 'the rains descended and the floods came.'

Perched, however, some six thousand feet above the sea-level, and shut in by rocky peaks some two thousand feet higher, and now clothed in their most luxuriant foliage, we receive less thankfully the deluges which are so welcome below, where, 'like a leopard's spotted and tawny hide,' stretch gasping plains, and where

> 'The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,'
> And drinks and gapes for drink again,'

and upon which the happiness, yea, even the very existence, of toiling dusky millions depends.

Verily we live 'in the clouds.' The great soft muggy mantle gathers slowly from the valleys below, and with a stealthy, noiseless march wraps alike misty mountain top, wood, precipice, and sleepy lake, in its embrace, as in cotton wool.

> 'And then again I dissolve in rain,
> And laugh as I pass in thunder.'

But it is such rain and such thunder as Shelley, with his experience of the northerly Apennines, never dreamt of.

Down upon the iron roof, with which all the dwellings of the hapless Europeans are covered, descends the deluge, with a din that drowns music, conversation, and even sleep, in the rooms below. The paths and gulleys transform themselves for the time being into miniature waterfalls, the placid lake is lashed into fury, and the huge *marseer*, which lie like logs on its surface, hurry to its bottomless depths. The very crows and ravens, the latter driven in from the higher ranges by the snow, sit and croak dejectedly. Last, but not least, the sneaking drops discover weak points in the roofs, and descend suddenly upon the nose of the unwary sleeper.

> 'The hooded clouds, like friars,
> Tell their beads in drops of rain.'

This damp state of things goes on for three months or so, and eighty inches of rain fall, more or less—generally speaking, more up here, where we require it less, and *vice-versâ* down below. If, perchance, that blissful period of sunshine called 'a break in the rains' intervenes for a few days, the plains folk croak dismally in the newspapers of a possible famine. Possibly, however, this arises only from a natural depression of spirits incident to living in a perpetual Turkish bath.

As the farmers say in England, the rains are 'a fine growing time.' Behold my English annuals — convolvulus, nasturtiums, and so on, which, though I wake every morning expecting to find the beds washed away into the lake below, scramble merrily over the terrace wall, and seem to enjoy life. Single dahlias are almost a weed, so rank are they on the banks.

Indoors things grow, too. I could

cultivate a nice little crop of mushrooms in dark, secluded corners, where the damp comes through the boards. As it is, a little colony of fungi flourishes there bravely, but uselessly. Boots and shoes and leather things generally become a great anxiety in the rains. Put them aside untouched for a few days, and they develop a coat of green mould hardly conducive to the beauty of their polish.

But if one's soul is vexed within one over these trivial trials, during the long hours when one is cooped up in the dark, damp shanty called a bungalow, the sights on the mountain-sides around amply compensate for them. For on the hillsides things grow, too. Here trunks of ilex, feathered with parsley fern, encrusted with moss from bole to tip—

> 'Bearded with moss and in garments green
> Stand like the Druids of eld;
> Stand like harpers hoar with beards which rest on their bosoms.'

Now round a corner we come upon rocks and boulders carpeted with hart's-tongue, polypody, and male fern, with the graceful wild ginger scenting the air with its lily-like flower, or a mauve orchis to give a dash of colour to the scene. Further on, where the mountain-side is not so steep, lies a soft bed of lycopodium, relieved by the feathery silver fern and begonias, while overhead a gnarled old ilex trunk groans with hanging orchids.

The mossy bed looks inviting enough to rest upon and peep down, deep down, between the rhododendron branches into the blue lake. But beware, rash æsthete! To begin with, it is saturated with moisture, this 'cool nook and mossy cell,' and you will get fever; and, secondly, that dreadful tree-cricket, whirring away like a policeman's rattle in the branches overhead, forbids repose; and, lastly, in the rains live things grow too.

Snakes I will not enlarge upon, because they are here, there, and everywhere in India, and, like the cholera, not to be mentioned to ears polite. Frogs. and toads, too, I will not dwell upon, though the rain seems to suit them, for they assume herculean proportions and cultivate a lung power which rivals in sonorousness the brass band of a rajah's regiment or the clamour over the Home Rule Bill.

But it is against the leeches that I would particularly warn you. These small and unpretending nuisances, whose Hindustanee name, singularly inappropriate, is *joke*, not content with distending themselves abnormally by a good suck up a dog's nose or on a native's bare brown leg, will insinuate themselves up any available aperture in the European boot or trouser. You perceive nothing till you see the blood oozing from you, and the wound is sometimes difficult to heal. The

poor horses and dogs suffer terribly, for once a leech is comfortably and inaccessibly ensconced in the nose or mouth, there is nothing for it but to keep the poor brute without water for twenty-four hours. The other brute—I mean the leech—gets thirsty too, and descends to drink, when he can be dealt with summarily with a pair of tweezers.

In the house live things flourish likewise in the rains. First and foremost are the fleas, which we have always with us to a certain extent, but which multiply and thrive exceedingly in the damp. The Indian flea is small and brown and active, and, as a rule, disdainful of Keating's insect powder. His unmentionable relations likewise abound at this season, in holes, the wall plaster, and such-like secluded spots. To vary the excitement of the chase, Gargantuan spiders, scorpions, centipedes, and divers many-legged

creatures, domesticate themselves among us with surprising familiarity. A minor and harmless nuisance are the fish insects, who devour paper and pictures.

But all these plagues put together do not rival the celebrated mosquito, which at this moment is scourging the folk in the plains, for up here, I triumphantly affirm, you may eat without the friendly *punkah* and the 'fly-whisk,' and you may sleep without the protecting mosquito-net. There are no 'skeeters' in the hills at this height. In May and June occasionally, however, a swarm of sand-flies is a good imitation of them.

And now I expect the gentle reader to be remarking that he is glad we get something—or, rather, get rid of something—by going up to the hills, as they seem rather a damp, moist, unpleasant sort of place in the rains.

This only proves, gentle reader, that, as

Uncle Remus remarked of the 'toofache,' you don't know what the alternative, what the Indian hot weather is. It is a thing to be felt and gone through, and not flippantly described for the delectation of the inhabitants of a more temperate clime, where you are always glad to see the sun, and don't get enough of him. But from the foregoing description of the discomforts we suffer up here in the rains, and when I have shown you what we go through to get up here, you will glean some faint suspicion of what it must be like below.

So start with me one balmy evening in the merry month of May. The glass is at—but no, I will not tell you, neither will I describe the listlessness, the sleepiness that cannot sleep, and the addled condition of your brain that can barely make out the time-table. No, I will put you straight into the train, with a languid

feeling of joy that you are really 'off to the hills,' mixed with an equally faint pity for those who are left behind.

The Government, consisting of the Lieutenant-Governor, with his planets, his satellites, and rising luminaries, and a perfect nebula of clerks, black and white, or half and half, fled to their mountain Capua weeks ago. The military leave season has sent officers to shoot in Cashmere or flirt in hill stations, and the men to loaf at convalescent stations and catch butterflies—'fly-dodging' they call it. Only the ancient Chief Justice and others of that ilk will wrangle in stuffy court-houses till October, with the thermometer at—but no, I will leave it to your imagination.

But there is a class of Europeans who are always left behind—I mean the railway employés, whose lives are spent in the hot brick barracks which cluster round every

large station, or in flying through the hot air in 'black holes' of brake-vans, or on gridirons of engines. No wonder many die in harness in the hot weather, of heat apoplexy or the like.

But I do not intend that a similar fate shall befall you, gentle reader. Behold a box full of ice, with soda-water bottles, a wet towel to fold round your throbbing head, while your bearer has arranged your pillow upon the long leather-covered seat. You may take off your white cotton coat, too, and sit in your under-vest only; no ladies travel this time of year. Directly the train is in motion the machine punkah will swing, and the grass mats in some of the windows will be sprinkled with water, so that the burning wind passes through them cool and refreshing. Were it daylight you would perceive that a beneficent company tries to cajole you into the belief that it is winter, by fitting blue glass into the

windows, through which the glaring world outside appears as if covered with snow.

But will the train ever start, and with it the punkah? Your head is bursting; every breath you draw seems to scorch your lungs, as the burning sirocco blows down the station. But there! I was not going to tell you how you felt.

At last, the blue-coated cooly has clanged the bar of iron which does duty for a bell. At last, the jabbering horde of natives and those moving bundles of clothes, their wives, have been pushed into the right carriages. The stationmaster and the guard have concluded their *chee-chee* patois conversation, and we are really off!

We rush through the suffocating pitch-dark night, through the thirsty, gasping land. We pass twinkling lights of mud villages, lurid noisy stations, with more crowds of natives, more clanging of bells,

more shouting for water. And so on, ever *da capo*, through the night.

Indian trains only run at about the rate of fifteen miles an hour, and the number of natives who travel is amazing and inexplicable.

Daylight dawns. The hideous landscape becomes distinct, and it is light enough for you to see how begrimed you are with dust. A suspicion of a cool breeze steals in; you fancy you could sleep. Make the most of the next half-hour, the coolest in the twenty-four. All too soon our dread tyrant mounts the eastern horizon. Over the sufferings of the next twelve hours, spent either in your small prison of a railway carriage, or the larger one of a waiting-room with an inattentive punkah-cooly, I will draw a merciful veil. But the longest day has an end, and when the sun sets in a brazen sky of molten copper, you descry an indistinct cloudy outline

fringing the low level plain eastwards. Courage! those are the Himalayas.

In former days, and not many years ago either, between them and you lay a sixty-miles jolt in an infernal machine called a *dâk-gharry*. Imagine a bathing-machine with sliding doors on either side and a perch for the driver in front. Inside you spread your bedding and lie at full length; no other position is possible, unless you hang your legs out of window over the wheel. So here you lie, 'cribbed, cabined, caged, confined,' stiff and cramped, jolted, jerked, and swayed about by a series of dejected tiny ponies, harnessed to the machine by an arrangement, not always on the best of terms, of rope and leather. At every stage the fresh pair evinces the same reluctance to start, necessitating the same shouting and reviling to coerce them into a breakneck gallop. You feel like a pill in a pill-box,

so top-heavy is the *gharry* with your luggage and your servants piled atop. One is thankful the darkness hides from one's enfeebled nerves the yawning ditches on either hand, and the clouds of dust which pursue one.

Nowadays, a very *pianissimo* railway, in even less of a hurry than most Indian lines, conveys the traveller in a little trainlet to a stationette at the very foot of the mighty mountains. It grows distinctly cooler as you jog through the Terai. This is a wide strip of jungle forest between the hills and the plains. It is the Paradise of the sportsman, and the den of the Fever Demon, who summarily strikes down those who at certain seasons venture into his dreaded domains. With the first streak of dawn you are aware of a dusky mass in front barring your progress. Presently dark shapes rise on either hand, and the railroad comes to a sudden end. You

have reached the foot of the hills. The dim twilight is full of cool freshness, and the delightful sounds of running water and chirping birds.

The male traveller now bestrides a mountain pony, with a coat like a bear and no tangible mouth. The weaker sex is borne aloft in a *dandy*, a sort of arm-chair on a pole on men's shoulders, *à la* Guy Fawkes. Every step upwards the air gets fresher and more champagne-like. The sun peeps over the hill-top and flickers on the shady path. You actually welcome his approach. You begin to think of breakfast and to button your coat. You are a changed man. What a difference a mile has made! You are in the hills!

The Himalayas come so sheer down to the plains that you can almost determine the exact spot where they begin. And then, what a shape and contour these have, the youngest range of mountains on

the earth! The path winds up under rhododendron-trees, in May dyeing the hillsides crimson, under stately deodar and hoary ilex. The river tumbles down the gorge on your right, half hidden by granite cliffs, and numberless unseen little torrents and cataracts answer it from the hills around. Fold after fold of purple mountain opens before you. The cuckoo calls across the valley; the cow-bells tinkle from the upland pastures.

Even the people have changed, too. The strapping cooly woman, with her gay petticoats tucked up gracefully, her short-waisted red jacket revealing a broad natural waistbelt of brown flesh, is utterly different from her languid, be-trousered, be-veiled sister in the plains, and lifts your heavy trunk on to her head with a merry cackle. They have a wonderful physique, these hill-folk. A 'Sahib' was once making a bargain at the foot of the

hills with a dozen natives to carry up his grand piano. When he had agreed at so much a head, to his amazement, one cooly shouldered it bodily, and, to earn the entire sum, carried it up twelve miles!

But on we go! Excelsior! What though the *dandy*-bearers pant and perspire, and the odour of these great unwashed (the hill-folk wash only once a year, on their holiest festival) makes itself apparent even among the sweet pine-woods! What though the hill pony requires many a whack and imprecation on the part of its attendant, who hangs on by its tail in the steepest parts! Courage! those little white specks among the trees on the mountain towering above the head of the valley are the outlying houses of Naini Tal.

Soon you are lured to breakfast and a rest at Douglasdale, a delicious web of

flowers and greenery, spread by a genial and loquacious old spider to tempt the weary traveller, and where he regales you on strawberries and cream. Then on you go! *en avant!* A steep pull up a series of zigzags, then past the Goorkha barracks, where the monkey-like little soldiers, the flower of our native army, look out upon you. Then you find yourself in the bazaar. It might be a Swiss village, with its *châlet*-like dark wood houses and its carved gables and balconies.

One look back. Behind, and far, far below, lie the hated plains, shimmering in a haze of heat, with broad, white river-beds and dark patches of jungle. Then round the sharp corner, and one of the loveliest spots on God's earth comes into view.

At your feet curls the green lake of Naini. A stream issuing from it rushes past you, and descends in a series of

cataracts, down hundreds of feet into the valley by which you have come up. You are in the crater of an extinct volcano, and all around the lake rise jagged peak and rugged precipice and forest-clad slope. Dotted about in the most inaccessible places are the white houses of the Europeans, and at the far end of the lake the tower of St. John in the Wilderness peeps out from among the trees under the precipitous heights of Cheena. There lies the only level place in the valley, about twelve acres, which does duty as general playground, where polo, cricket, and tennis go on simultaneously all the merry six months of the season.

In September, 1880, all England thrilled with horror as the merciless cable flashed the news of a disaster which had overwhelmed beautiful Naini. It had rained without ceasing for three days, and thirty

inches of rain had fallen. A small portion of the hill to the right of the Assembly Rooms, situated on the shore at the head of the lake, had slipped, burying some out-houses belonging to the hotel, which was hastily vacated. Then suddenly, and noiselessly, with no warning, half the wooded hillside, carrying with it Government House and other bungalows, slid swiftly down, first on the hotel and the devoted rescue-party from the barracks, who were digging for some buried natives. Then, with increasing velocity, the stupendous mass bore down upon the tall shop on the edge of the cricket-ground, on the Hindu temple in the grove on the shore, and the Assembly Rooms beyond. Soldiers, shop-keepers, priests, amateur actors rehearsing 'Our Boys' in the rooms, were overwhelmed as in a gigantic avalanche, which choked up the valley and sent a great

wave rushing down the lake. A great cloud of dust mercifully veiled the scene, and no eye saw the actual catastrophe, no ear caught the sound of the cries, drowned in the patter of the rain.

But gay and giddy Naini has recovered herself. The great scar on the mountain side is green, and a new Assembly Rooms rises on the old site. A window in the church has been erected in memory of those who were lost, and protective measures have been taken in the chaining of the hillsides, so that such a disaster can never recur.

Social life goes on the same as ever. Ascend to the rim of the basin, as it were, to some breezy hill-top, and look down fifteen hundred feet. The green lake is studded with various boats and canoes, perhaps a four-oared race, even, is in progress; the cricket-ground is all alive, and

the sound of a band comes up from the midst of a gay crowd by the Assembly Rooms. Now look up, and out to the west. The great sun is sinking over the Terai in a glory of crimson and gold, such as only Eastern lands know. Mysterious lights and shades of evening flit over mountain and forest and gorge. A chorus of frogs comes up from the lake. From St. Mary's Convent, among the trees, vespers are ringing, and the Hindu gong calls to prayers from the new pagoda. Now glance eastwards. There they rise, the snow giants, a vast pearly half-circle stretching away on either hand. Even as we gaze, they gather a rosy tint from the setting sun, and a hush of awe falls on the beholder.

Somehow or other, in this solemn moment our thoughts wander back to a misty island in the northern seas which we call

'home,' and a pang comes over us, exiles here in this 'land of regrets,' for

'When in other climes we meet
Some vale or isle enchanting,
Where all looks flow'ry, wild, and sweet,
And naught save love is wanting;
We think how great had been our bliss,
If Heaven had but assigned us
To live and die in scenes like this
With some we've left behind us.'

OF THE HIGHLANDS OF CENTRAL INDIA

A BREAK IN THE MONSOON:

A FISHING MEMORY.

For a fortnight past the rain has fallen unceasingly. The sky has been one huge wet sponge, from which the Earth has had rain squeezed over her and 'taken it in at the pores,' the 'pores' being those deep, thirsty-looking cracks in the black 'cotton-soil' of the Nerbudda Valley. But last evening there were signs of an amnesty: first a solar and then a lunar rainbow, and between them an attempt at sunset glories, and, more comforting than even rainbows and red sunsets, and such promissory phenomena, our local barometer appeared!

The barometer of the Pachmari plateau is Dhupghar, a high conical peak that towers above the tableland, and is at once our lion and our weather-gauge. When it is hidden by clouds we know that the south-west monsoon is in full blast, and many days of steady rain may be looked for. When it is visible we can afford to leave our mackintoshes at home.

Phœbus Apollo is not so smilingly forsworn in India as in England, and the shepherds' maxims that we all quoted at the club last night are all verified this morning.

I rose at six. All nature was up before me, laughing and 'dew-pearled.' A divine air swept over the tableland, and every thing and person seemed to be arranging for a 'day in the open.' Near barracks some soldiers were rolling the cricket-ground, but I am off up the stream that drains the now jungle-covered racecourse

under Dhupghar, to fish and look at Nature hanging her wardrobe out to dry. A few fleecy clouds still hang in mid-air; the day is like Lochinvar's lady-love, with

'A smile on her cheek and a tear in her eye.'

The past storms have left her trembling and sighing, and she cannot yet settle to the day's happiness.

My henchman, a broad-faced Gond boy, black as a coal, loves these outings, and has had the rods and bait and luncheon-basket ready for the last hour. Let us start.

The path to the stream runs through a patch of tree jungle. As I enter it there is a general air of resuscitation everywhere. August in these hills is really high spring-time. True, there is not in India the exquisite, minute mosaic work about nature that one notices in a temperate climate, but here is the nearest approach to it I

know, excepting only in the wondrous uplands of Cashmere.

The freshness of the breeze, the *riant* look of everything, remind me of that beautiful passage in Lucretius which describes birds and trees, beasts and flowers, rejoicing after, and giving thanks for, the rain. The 'useful trouble' is worth enduring if only for so delicious an interlude.

But the brute creation has other sides to its character. Just outside my quarters a large toad (one of those that select your boots for nursery operations) is taking a constitutional. It is very fat, and progresses in spasmodic bounds; it is nervous, too, knowing its own edible merits, for this is an animal of a 'turtle soup' type, and suspects aldermanic enemies. As it passes a crack in the wall of my bath-room, a huge centipede dashes out, like a Malay pirate from a Ladrone Island creek. A terrible battle ensues. The toad has the best

of the weights, but is sadly out of condition. The centipede, fully seven inches long, has a longer reach, and at once fixes his strong nippers in the region of the toad's jugular, whilst his Briareus body curls and clings round the off fore and near hind-legs of his bulky prey. The toad staggers and pants, rolls over, vainly tries to crush his horny foe, and soon lies gasping and exhausted. Panther-like, the centipede proceeds to suck its blood. At this point I interfere, separate them with two sticks, kill the centipede, and recommend the toad to go home and stay there. He proceeds to do so, when—whish-h!—down swoops a hawk that has watched the fight from the roof of my cookhouse, drops a claw in passing, and carries off the toad! 'It's a fine day; let's go and kill something,' is said elsewhere than in England. Life is largely made up of slaying. To complete the scene I ought to have shot the hawk.

There is a passage in the 'Light of Asia' that expresses what I mean very vividly :

'Then marked he, too,
How lizard fed on ant, and snake on him,
And kite on both, and how the fish-hawk robbed
The fish tiger of that which it had seized ;
The shrike chased the bulbul, which did hunt
The jewelled butterflies : till everywhere
Each slew a slayer, and in turn was slain,
Life living upon death. So the fair show
Veiled one vast, savage, grim conspiracy
Of mutual murder, from the worm to man,
Who himself kills his fellow.'

But under the trees it is more peaceful. On a dock-leaf lies a great pearl-tinted silk moth. It looks as washed-out as an August Londoner. A stray sunbeam glances on its poor bedraggled glories, and it is palpably enjoying the 'sweet self-pity' so dear to convalescents.

At the foot of a *hurra* tree grows a clump of gigantic red toadstools ; under them is a perfect kindergarten of young frogs, left there for safety whilst their parents are away foraging.

Then two birds scuttle away through the undergrowth, and, when at a safe distance, rise and fly tortuously through the trees. To my astonishment, I recognise them as ox-eyed plovers, rare—nay, unknown in these hills. Later on I will try to account for their appearance.

Now the level water-meadows gleam, emerald and dewy, through the trees, and we reach the stream. The fish therein are but small. The lordly *mahseer* lives in the great river below the plateau, but cannot run up to this level.

The stream might almost be an English trouting brook — here running between high banks, overshadowed by trees and creepers, there gliding gently through verdant meadows, there rushing over gravelly shallows, or, again, plunging in lilliputian cataracts down a staircase of rock, to swirl round in a deep blue basin at the foot. In such pools lurk the Indian barbel—the

leviathan of this brook—running to eight ounces at the utmost. In the swift and shallow waters, and always in the shade, is found a beautiful species of bleak that rises freely to the fly, especially to the blue dun and the black gnat.

We are soon at work. The barbel lie as thickly as at a Thames mill-tail. They are prodigiously hungry too! Seven good ones soon line my basket. They are much darker than their English brothers, but very good to eat.

A strange figure now approaches the pool at which I am fishing—a lean, wrinkled, hungry-looking Fakir, with ash-smeared face, and pilgrim's gourd and staff. He eyes me silently, and soon asks, by signs, for some fish. I give him three, whereupon he breaks out into voluble blessings, standing on one leg and pointing at me as he speaks. Anon he drops the fishes into his gourd and goes his way.

A scented breeze sweeps over and bends the tall feathery grasses by the water. Minahs and doves alight at the lower end of the pool, to bathe and preen themselves on the flashing shallows. A small kingfisher—the only one I have ever seen on the plateau—dashes up and down stream without noticing me—nay, dives and catches a fish under my very nose.

We next move up to a long still pool overshadowed by a great tree. Here the bleak prove very amenable to reason and black gnats. Small claret-coloured dragonflies swarm among the bulrushes. To the great tree overhead comes 'the idle schoolboy,' on his rare excursions from the wooded ravines.

There is, I think, an immense love of adventure in birds. That is what made those ox-eyed plovers come up here. They were not born here; they find far better food below in the valley, but they

were tired of the monotonous life of the lowlands, and so they started through the jungles and ravines, and breasted the boulder-strewn precipices. that scarp our Highlands. Perhaps, also, it is not vulgar considerations of food and breeding-grounds that bring the snipe and wild-fowl annually from their reedy homes in Turkestan and Thibet over the great snow wall to India.

'Across the hills and far away'

may have its poetry for them, too. They, perhaps, may share the strange joy that man feels when new vistas of the unknown are opened to him. Or is it given only to us men to thrill 'like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken'? If so, why do the very caddis-flies crawl up from their homes at the roots of the bulrushes, up, up into the thin, glaring, dangerous air? Mrs. Scott Gatty says it

is from love of novelty; and I think she is right.

During lunch a large woodpecker, yellow and red and black, flies into the tree overhead. He taps carefully until he finds a weak spot in the bark; then scratches and pecks until he reveals a colony of woodlice. Though hungry, this woodpecker is an epicure. He tries one insect, with head aperk, then smacks his mandibles approvingly; it is a good brand of woodlouse, evidently. And now a dull roar, as of a distant waterfall, drowns all other sounds. The sound travels towards us. The Gond boy promptly wraps his head in his blanket. It is a swarm of bees!

Not a swarm in our ordinary English sense, but a vast column, as of locusts, that sweeps along the course of the stream for quite five minutes. Above, and all round, dozens of birds are circling, darting,

and preying on the roaring column, like Cossacks on the skirts of a retreating army.

Towards evening a hare hops near, and sits up in the grass to watch me. He presses one forepaw to his face with a quaint suggestion of toothache.

There are now about forty fish in the basket. We have worked up to the race-course, and the stream has dwindled down to an almost unseen rill, winding through tall grass-jungle, much frequented by a vividly green sort of snake.

The shadows fall longer and longer. The sun has done his work right well, and the tears are all dried from Demeter's eyes. Delicious scents are wafted from every thicket. Nature's distillery is working at high-pressure; for the bees, as we saw, have made their yearly visit to the hills, and must be fed. Stinging remarks on the place and its inhabitants are apt to

follow any interference with their creature comforts.

Let us leave the stream now, and strike into the circular road at the western end of the tableland. It is the nearest way home.

Here mighty buttresses of rock stand up and out from the edge of the level plateau. Between these, deep and almost impenetrable ravines (the home of 'the idle schoolboy') trend steeply and darkly down to the forests below. The setting sun is sending horizontal shafts and waves of light through the trees in these abysses, flooding them with a tender green that, on the young shoots of the bamboos, is almost golden.

The sky is a saffron archipelago of fairy islands, whose shores and capes and peaks are touched with red and orange. The lowlands lie dim and mystic in purple gloom. The voices of the night echo through the shadowy forest.

A waterfall raves unseen far down one of the ravines. I should like to explore its mysteries.

So dies the day! Dies with martial pomp and with pageant of red and purple and gold, and with a funeral volley over its grave as the monsoon clouds sweep round Dhupghar once more, and the thunder reverberates, the summer lightning flashes, amongst the eternal hills.

A MOUNTAIN HERMIT.

ABOUT five miles southward from Pachmari, the road to Chindwara, after zigzagging over a steep wooded ridge (one of the outlying spurs of the plateau), makes an equally steep descent into a very lovely valley. Opposite the crest of the ridge the great hill of Mahadeo rises on the right hand in steep terraces of black rock; away to the left is the wild and almost inaccessible cone of Chauraghar. Between these peaks the foot-hills recede into the dim distance; in the far background the extreme southern range of the Satpuras bounds the view. The valley

into which the road dips lies between Mahadeo Hill and the traveller on the ridge. Its upper slopes are a beautiful feathery wilderness of bamboo brake; then it widens out into a dense mass of gigantic forest trees; below is an emerald lawn of richest turf, hedged in by the teak forest of the lower levels.

The bamboo brake of the upper valley ends suddenly at a cliff that curves round so as to form a semicircular glen wherein grow the great trees I have mentioned. Over the edge of this cliff leaps a bright waterfall; below, and rather to one side, the cliff is pierced by a dark cavern, from which trickles a small, but clear and cold streamlet that at once joins the pool at the cascade's foot.

The cave is known as that of Mahadeo, and at its mouth, under a humble pent-house, lives the old Fakir.

His home is open to the four winds of

heaven, though in truth the winds are tempered for him and all in this beautiful spot.

The great trees form a perpetual and thick shade, beneath which it is always cool. The stream is icy cold even in May. The air is balmy with sweet forest perfumes. Innumerable ferns droop in loving fashion over the pool hard by, and line the rivulet's margin. The very trunks of the trees are a mass of long grasses and hart's-tongue ferns and lilac-coloured orchids; blue thrushes and many other sweet-throated birds live familiarly close to the shrine.

The Fakir is a little wizened man, prematurely aged as with long silent watchings for that which never comes, and worn with fasting and the weariness of a life that has no smiles and few tears. He has a very good and kindly expression of face, drawn and abstracted though it is,

like the faces one sometimes sees in monasteries — faces that are turned to something beyond the world, yet grieving in and for it.

The shrine is nothing very wonderful to look at, but formerly it was one of the holiest in the Central Provinces. The pilgrims, however, brought in their train all sorts of epidemics ; and the Government in consequence threw cold water on the annual gathering of the devout who flocked hither.

Now it boasts only of a few stray worshippers ; it displays but a few ragged flags fluttering over a pent-house, beneath which repose a stone ball, a small lingam, a carved staff, and a string or two of cowries. Last, but not least, it has three large and rich-toned bells. The stone floor of the cave hard by is strewn with votive cocoanut shells. This cavern runs far into the cliff, farther than the bad air

and whizzing bats will allow one to penetrate. The native mind has exaggerated the little unknown into a mile-long passage leading to a demon-guarded treasure.

I first drew the old Fakir out of his civil apathy by means of his bells. They were evidently the lions of the place, and so I asked him what were the inscriptions on them. He did not know. Indeed, he could not read at all; knew only certain prayers and blessings, and haply curses, by heart, and the histories of the great gods.

I set to work and deciphered the legend on one of them. It was very like the dedication lines on many bells in European churches:

'This bell did Rajah Baji, of somewhere-in-the-neighbourhood, bring from Benares, and offer Mahadeo, in the year ——.'

The Fakir was delighted. He ran his shrivelled old fingers over the inscription,

and made me repeat it to him many times. Then he sat down on an old panther-skin, and, rocking himself to and fro, repeated the words to himself like a child learning a lesson by heart. Doubtless he felt that his little shrine had in some way gone up in prestige. Now and again he smiled at me, and at last I drew him into conversation. He told me of the great flaming trident-altar on steep Chauraghar opposite. Every year he goes to worship at that weird altar, and to smear its iron tridents afresh with the sacred vermilion paint. Very steep and hard is the path for the old man, and by the permission of the Great God he will only go once more. He told me how Siva had left the villages in peace since that altar was raised, and never strikes down houses or men with his lightnings now. He told, too, how Kali, the dread Cholera Goddess, passed darkling from the cavern's mouth at times, and scattered

pestilence and famine over the land from Mahadeo's peak, and then returned, smiling cruelly, and with her wild hair streaming in the night-wind that blew up the glen.

The beasts of the jungle come out and look at him, while the moonlight strikes thinly down through the trees overhead. But the great gods protect him—at least, until it is his fate to die. The old panther-skin is his only coverlet at night. A little fire of dry wood smoulders always on his bare floor. As he talks he comes in gentle kindliness, and offers a piece of live charcoal for my pipe.

Next he spoke of the hidden treasure of Mahadeo. It is not in the cave, he says, but buried deep down a great precipice where no man could ever find it unless the exact clue were given to him; but only one man had ever been in possession of that clue, and he died silent many years

ago. For the Rajah who owned the treasure (and who was proscribed for murder and other crimes) had taken it little by little to the great cliff's edge, and one henchman, faithful to the last, had gone down that awful precipice, slung by a rope, and hidden away at its foot all the treasure—gold mohurs, and diamonds, and rubies, and images of the gods.

Then, when the last burden had been safely lowered, and the stanch servant had climbed nearly to the top again, the cruel Rajah, arguing inwardly that a secret is no secret if two share it, drew his sword across the rope, and the murdered servant's bones lie across and guard the treasure to this day.

Just then two sturdy retainers of a neighbouring Thakur came up to the shrine, and, after devotions paid and blessings received, sat down, and (as all good spearmen in these parts love to do) began to

talk of Tantia Bhil, the Robin Hood of British India. Tantia Bhil was at that time living in the Great Bori Forest that covers the foot-hills and low country to the south-west of Pachmari.

The mild old Fakir's eyes quite glittered at this topic. 'Tantia is no robber of the poor,' quoth he. 'The strong and the rich he will attack, but he never takes the pice (copper coins) from the wood-cutter, or the bangle from the village girl's arm.' The old Fakir is human, after all.

'Tantia,' the spearmen chime in, 'fears no man. Last year he heard that the Thanadar (chief of police) at Pachmari had boasted that he would soon catch Tantia. Three days later the Pachmari barber fell sick, and a strange barber came to shave the Thanadar. "You are about to catch Tantia?" asked the deputy. "That will I—the scoundrel!" quoth the Thanadar. "Then catch him, for I am he!" With

these words the outlaw cut off the poor policeman's nose and vanished.'

Thirty policemen guard the marches to the west, over the Rori Ghaut, for fear Tantia and his freebooters should again come up from their jungles on to our tableland.

As we talk, a melodious tinkle of bells is heard. The sound blends sweetly with the murmur of the cascade. Soon through the trees I see, crossing the ford on the Chindwara road, a crowd of Ḅrinjaras and their convoy of mighty carrier-bullocks. The beasts stop to drink in the stream or crop a few mouthfuls of tender grass from the banks.

Their owners come up to the shrine, and each one brings some little gift for the Great God—one a handful of grain, another some cowries, a third a measure of oil. To each man the Fakir gives a kindly look, with no discrimination in

favour of the largest giver. Willing givers they all are. Did they not pass unharmed only yesterday through the jungle where the terrible cattle-fighting tiger lives? Therefore thanks be to the Great God and to his priest.

Then each man humbly asks permission to strike one of the big bells. The sonorous chimes boom out with many echoes under the cliff. The cattle in the stream toss their own small bells with an idea of accompaniment, and with short but good-natured salutations the hereditary Pickfords of India rejoin their merchandise.

When everybody has gone the Fakir becomes again theological. His theology is very vague, and with more of demon than of dogma in it. Prayers to him mean but deprecating hands raised to a ruthless tyrant, or a lively sense of favours to be withheld. Mahadeo and Siva

whisper strange things to him in the long lonely nights. The cascade shouts forebodings of terror; the trees shudder at the passing of messenger spirits; the wild beasts howl the sufferings of metamorphosed souls; the mountains only bid him be of good cheer, for that matter is eternal. I do not suppose that he formulates these thoughts to himself; but all his words tell of a religion of fear—a religion that has in it no progress, that holds out no hope.

'Hope' is conspicuous by its absence throughout the East. Greed and ambition you may see—forethought and resolution, even—but rarely the hopeful look that makes the eye bright, the figure erect, and the spirit blithe.

But I am neglecting my host and his surroundings.

The beautiful blue thrushes hop round my feet fearlessly. They are the choristers of this cathedral. A mongoose hovers

near with a hungry look that suggests the verger.

The sun strikes slantingly on the red tridents that gleam afar on Chauraghar. Long shadows creep across the Chindwara road, and the Fakir has a sort of casual evening service to perform. The bells and the blue thrushes are the chief accessories. The mongoose confines himself to stealing some of the corn that the Brinjaras left.

My syce leads the pony up from the ford, and I prepare to mount. I give the old Fakir a rupee, which he takes indifferently. He does not despise the amount; for the tithes of passers-by feed him, and he has no expensive tastes. He gives me a parting blessing; but the sunset is his curfew, I suppose, for he is nodding sleepily over the fire, and monotonously repeating the legend on the bell. The road is deserted, and for him the night settles down, a time for sleeping or

for watching and self-communing, but, above all, a time of utter loneliness.

Poor old dreamer! Celibate of celibates! The three consonants of his name do indeed, as the Oriental saying runs, sum up his life: 'Care! hunger! privation!'

No wife has ever prepared his scanty meal. No children have ever run to him through the twilight with the sweet laughter that lightens toil. Has any thought of a loved companion, I wonder, sent wild sweet thrills through his being? Has the spirit, aiming at Nirvana, ever fretted behind its earthly bars, and cried out that the *lakhs* of ages of evolution and purification were too hard a task? Has a dark-haired, bright-eyed maiden ever lingered by the village well till shame forbade her any longer to stay for him? Did she, like the pure knight Pèrcival's love, die and leave him? Was it her loss

that sent him to the service of the silent gods? He could not tell now, or would not.

In a little while Mahadeo will descend from his hill, and will lay a cold hand on the solitary, tired old heart, and in the morning the fire will be burnt out, and the blue thrushes and ever-hungry mongoose alone will welcome the pious wayfarers that come to the shrine.

UNDER THE TREE-FERNS.

'Nullo penetrabilis astro
Lucus iners.'

A FEW years ago I spent part of a summer's night under the arching fronds of tree-ferns and broad gleaming leaves of palms and plantains. Soft sweet perfumes made the air intoxicating to every sense; a silver shimmering lake bounded the scene—a lake on which fairy skiffs came and went, plied by dim oarsmen, and with diaphanous forms seated at the helm. Little wooded islands dotted the water's surface. Among their greenery, innumerable lights flashed and twinkled like fireflies.

On shore, soft sensuous music was made, from the centre of a rhododendron thicket, by invisible musicians, to whose rhythmical harmonies bright gauze-clad forms moved, linked always with larger and darker figures. Ariel seemed to hover over the hidden music in half-envious rapture. Puck sat smiling at a plate of strawberries and cream, or hid his face and his smiles in champagne-cup. This fairyland was within the cab radius. Titania and Oberon were within the postal limits; it was the Botanical Society's Midnight Fête. . . . Since that night I have again spent some time under tree-ferns, but this time I sought them in their own dark, unscanned homes, which no human footstep has, I think, ever yet trodden.

Below Keating Point—one of the rock buttresses at the western edge of the Pachmari plateau — runs a vast and precipitous ravine, formed originally by a

volcanic spasm that rent the edge of our upland plain asunder. The healing hand of Time has covered the fissure with the richest and rarest of tropical plants, shaded over and hidden from above by huge forest trees. Here no rosy dawn or rosier eve mark the birth and death of the day; but, at morning, a dim light suffuses wearily these recesses, to be succeeded at night by a darkness that can almost be felt.

From the Point a narrow ledge of rock runs obliquely down one side of this ravine. Trees grow on this ledge; and, arguing that 'where trees can grow man can go,' by this ledge I decided to attempt my descent. First, and most dangerous, came smooth grass and stunted bushes; then the ledge widened to afford foothold to mighty trees and clumps of bamboos; then came a damp slope of begonia and fern-covered moss, down which I slid and

scrambled and swung myself by the rope-like creepers that trailed from the trees above, and at last I reached the bed of the ravine, but with no apparent means of returning. All was still, save for the rush of the stream that I had often heard from Keating Point, but never before seen. No birds sang! Even 'the idle schoolboy' seemed to stay higher up above this dank twilight.

The *religio loci* at once seized on me, so dark and hushed was it. What Dryads ever haunted this lifeless grove? What Naiads ever sported in this secret stream? Never could the sun play in their tangled locks; never could the zephyrs force their way down to toss those locks in the sun, if he were here.

But look! the whole ravine is one mass of tree-ferns. Some like Titanic brackens, some like beech-ferns, and some with mighty fingers like the tentacles of a

sea-monster. Fifteen and twenty feet high they grow, and wave their fronds over me as if in an incantation. In the crevices of the rocks they grow, and by the torrent's edge. They spread their roots over great boulders, and lap them round the edges of sharp rocks. Nothing else save a few wild plantains, smooth-leaved and gleaming, like great green stars in this murky hot pit.

I follow down the stream. The ravine seems shut in absolutely by a sombre wall of rock that confronts me. Is there no way out into the more level jungles below? Does the torrent return to the earth whence it sprang, like those mysterious Brittany rivers, to leap out into the sunshine again in some far-distant province?

It is intensely hot, with a smell of mouldering leaves strongly suggestive of malaria. How different from the fair

balsam-spangled glades and merry woods above, where Guinevere might ride with her Launcelot, a symphony in sunlight and rose!

Here one looks for no less an apparition than the ghost of some Fakir, wandering grim and ashen; or Macbeth's Witches, perhaps, gathering henbane to work their evil spells; or the bleached bones of some harmless victim, hurled over the cliff in the old lawless days.

Progress is very slow. Sometimes waist-deep in the stream I wade, sometimes spring from boulder to boulder. Small fish dart in the brown pools; in the sullen, stagnant backwaters many-legged repulsive insects creep and whirl and dive. Big red crabs scuttle away over the slimy rocks, and suddenly a great black serpent makes a gliding rush almost from under my feet, and leads the way down the chasm. Now the stream disappears in a

moraine of mossy rocks, over which I clamber with difficulty; then it emerges into view once more.

> 'Amid heaps
> Of mountain wreck on either side thrown high,
> The widespread traces of its wintry night,
> The tortuous channel wound.'

And ever the mighty tree-ferns weave their twilight spells over me. Now and again I pass a cornice of rock daintily besprent with delicate Central India parsley-fern, and with begonias, larger and richer than those above.

The murmur of the stream rises to a roar. The old ravine narrows into two walls of rock that tower overhead till they are merged in the far-off foliage of the trees; at my feet these walls meet to form a black cavern, into which the stream plunges by a series of devil's punch-bowls, worn by its eddying rush. Beyond this point no eye can trace it. The secret of

the stream must remain a secret until the valleys are exalted.

I am tired and hungry, so I sit down by these Erebean portals and eat my frugal lunch. You cannot carry many of the luxuries of the season into these ravines; commissariat is limited by the difficulties of transport.

Not a sign of life to make the place less dismal! This might be the spot where that treasure is buried of which the Fakir of Mahadeo and the Gond woodcutters tell such legends.

What gnome or dragon would spring into view if one did penetrate that treasure-house? What is the 'open sesame' to admit one to those precincts? Those treasures will lie buried and useless, as a genius neglected, till, perhaps, some day gold is no longer a currency, and jewels have no transcendent lustre for deeper-seeing eyes.

This place is too savage and gloomy for pleasant thoughts. There are none of the sweet voices and companionship of the woods here among the tree-ferns—only the deadly damp of a grave, the breathless heat of a tropical Inferno.

I think that the love of trees is almost universal, especially of pines and firs. We were not far wrong in boyhood when we thought their 'slender spires were close against the sky.' Apropos of spires, perhaps the Christian church-spire (so like a fir-tree), which is symbolic of upward-looking and guidance, was suggested to the Gothic mind by the fir-trees of the Gothic Fatherland. We know that architecture takes its forms from familiar national or local objects; as, for example, the Tartar-tent shape reproduced in Mogul tombs and mosques.

Yes; we all seek the woods to learn and commune. I think it is in David

Elginbrod that this idea first attracted me. Blake, too, speaks of

> 'The ancient word
> That walked among the silent trees.'

Adam and Eve sought knowledge from the tree; and beneath a tree sat Buddha whilst wisdom came to him.

German poetry is full of tree-love. Pine-trees waving high bring always a sense of rest.

Our English love of the oak, again, is almost a national trait. There is no psychological interest about the oak, and little sentiment, but it is essentially the symbol of youth and strength and faith. Will Shakespeare's 'woodnotes clear and wild' were all sung under an oak.

> 'Under the greenwood tree
> Who loves to vie with me,
> And tune his merry note
> Unto the sweet bird's throat?
> Come hither, come hither, come hither!
> Here shall we fear no enemy,
> Save wind and rough weather!'

There is 'oak' in every line of it! Charles II. can testify to the yeoman service of the oak; and 'hearts of oak' is an expression that embodies more than an attribute to all of our race.

I have often thought how much 'the idle schoolboy' would enjoy an oak! He would explore every branch and knob and hollow in it, and try to make friends with the other birds, who would turn up their beaks superciliously, muttering, 'Touch of the tarbrush!'

There is a so-called oak on our plateau, but it is a very distant relation. But here, beneath these fronds of tree-fern that wave their arms at me, I cannot rest. Their long limbs seem to clutch at me with Thug-like purpose. Truly a fitting spot for the worship of Kali, goddess of Thugs as well as of pestilence! They are so inferior to trees, these ferns. They bear no flower, no fruit; they harbour no

birds, their shade is useless. Whereas trees do half the work of the world. They draw grateful showers down to the parched earth. They shade and shelter man and beast and tender flowers. They give green homes to the birds, and ribs for the great ship that will take me home again to England some day, and roof-trees to sleep under when living, and a coffin to sleep in when our work is done.

It is time to go. I will try and find a way out by following the stream to its source.

The climb is not as hard as it looks from above. After passing the point at which I entered the ravine, signs of animal life occur. That black serpent crops up again on the way, and again rushes ahead of me. We seem to play a game at 'hide and seek' together. At every turn in the valley I expect it to pop out with the serpentine equivalent of 'Boh!'

Next some spur fowl scuttle away, disturbed at their siesta, and go pitter-patter over the fallen leaves with little 'cheeps' of mutual comfort and support. Then three peafowl start up with a metallic flashing of wings and with hoarse throaty cries of alarm, and a four-horned antelope wildly bounds up a side ravine with that quaint hitch of the hind-quarters that makes novices think it wounded when quite untouched. Long after it has disappeared, its curious dog-like bark echoes and re-echoes among the cliffs.

The tracks of wild pig become quite numerous, and by a little sandy pool are the fresh footprints of a panther. It must have drunk here at dawn, after supping on one of the Pachmari fox-terriers that was carried off last night while out courting.

Overhead a troop of monkeys are doing gymnastics on the camel's-foot creepers. The old ones take it easy, and merely

teach their young ones the three R's of monkeydom.

Just under Keating Point the ravine becomes terribly steep. The trees stand about in all sorts of uncomfortable positions, like shy youths at a crowded kettle-drum. The stream-bed is now only a V-shaped funnel of rock, littered with boulders, as if some Titan (with a vague idea of levelling things up) had thrown several Stonehenges over the cliffs.

At last I reach the source of the stream, a spring gushing out of a vertical cliff. There seems no way of getting any farther except by climbing a creeper that runs up the face of the cliff, and so reaching the level sward above. As I approach this natural ladder, out dashes a swarm of big yellow hornets from a half-built nest between the creeper and the rock. For a moment I feel very much 'up a tree,' though that creeper is still unclimbed.

Down on hands and knees I throw myself, and scramble into a little strip of high grass that runs along an unpleasantly narrow ledge to my left. Heaven only knows how far, or where, it will take me! Away I crawl, like a wounded rabbit among the brackens, the hornets buzzing over my grassy protection. Soon, by good luck, and unstung, I get into the upward trail of some wild pigs (a sure guide to level ground), and at last I venture to stand upright.

In ten minutes more I am lying on my back, far above the tree-ferns, gasping and dead beat, and very glad to breathe once more the pure fresh air that sweeps along the sunny Highlands.

'THE IDLE SCHOOLBOY:'

A JUNGLE MEMORY.

AMONG Browning's lesser poems is a subtle and beautiful piece called 'A Sonata of Galuppi,' in which an old fantasia by a half-forgotten Venetian brings before the poet's eyes, as in a picture, the life of mediæval Venice. He sees the carnival in mid-whirl—Shylock's Bridge, merchant princes, gallant nobles, and fair women. I, too, listened to a sonata the other day that brought many past scenes back to my thoughts, and almost to my eyes. This is how I came to hear it.

Deep in the most inaccessible and

wooded ravines of the Central Indian Highlands, where never-failing streams gush from beneath huge rocks and gnarled tree-trunks, to make a vernal garden throughout the year of maidenhair and orchids and moss, where the fierce sun is tempered to half his heat before he reaches to these 'verdurous mossy ways,' there lives a bird, I know not of what class—linnet or finch, lark or thrush—that is known locally as 'the idle schoolboy.' I know not even whether ornithology has taken note of him. He first sang to me one day as I sat on the edge of a deep bosky gorge, and my companion, better versed than I in these jungles and their choristers, said, 'Hark! "the idle schoolboy"!' as his 'wood-notes, sweet and wild,' rang up the glen. I had casually thought, 'What a sweet whistle! but whose can it be? Surely the gorge is inaccessible!'

Never have I heard any voice of animal

or bird that was so human, and that must be the secret of its charm. I cannot describe the bird's notes to you: they form no rapturous love-song, no joyous lay of summer sung in 'full-throated ease'; it was but a sweet, careless, fitful series of long-drawn notes with no time and no tune, only fresh with the freshness of youth, happy with the happy-go-lucky lightness of boyhood, and suggestive of idleness beyond redemption.

Since then I have cultivated the bird's acquaintance sedulously. Seldom does he leave his green haunts; he is as coy as Psyche's midnight love, so I take him on trust. Once, indeed, he came down into the open, by a stream in which I was fishing, and he hopped about and whistled so confidently that I fell to answering him. His idleness was so infectious that I felt inclined to be absent from parade next day, and taste the fearful joy of being a

truant too. We chatted to each other for half an hour, and I caught one glimpse of him through the lemon grass. He was a modest, homely bird of neutral tints, and somewhat like a cross between a blackbird and thrush, but was evidently afraid of being recognised, and possibly classified, and I am on scarcely more than nodding terms with him now. I have just been calling on him in his own particular gorge. He is almost always there at sunset, for his goings and comings are not interfered with by bird-fanciers or other vandals. No 'cruel generations' hunt him down in these wide woodlands.

What a toccata that song was for me! Free bird! pipe those wild, careless notes everlastingly! Your simple art brings back the fairest memories of life. I listen, and am no longer in India; no longer on the downward side of thirty; no longer do I feel hipped; and the fruit I eat does not

grow by the Dead Sea, but in the gardens of the Hesperides.

What is this? A shady country lane in Wiltshire, I think, for the bold green downs slope upward to the right to meet the clear blue sky; the short turf is dotted here and there with moving white spots, and I hear the faint tinkling of bells hung on the rams' necks. To the left rich water meadows drop gently down to a clear and rather swift stream; the road is winding and very white; tall hedges border it—hedges that are guiltless of the pruning-hook, hedges full of woodbine and dog-roses, and with whole families of violets at their roots. The water meadows are a mass of cowslips, and afford a very good time to the sleek cows that stand knee-deep by the stream. They are no respecters of flowers, these cows, and are particularly ruthless about cowslips. A square old tower, much affected by jack-

daws, shows through the trees ahead, and from behind it I hear the imperious summons of the school-bell. A shallow beck crosses the road; carts must ford it; a wooden foot-bridge takes it in one stride. On the bridge-rail lounges russet-cheeked Corydon, who looks sometimes into the water beneath, but oftener towards the gate of the water meadows; and anon the gate opens, and pretty Lalage, with a big milking-pail in each hand, steps into the roadway.

She is very comely, and straight and graceful with youth and health, and the sprays of dog-rose swing forward, and seem to whisper to her:

'Come, kiss me, sweet and twenty.'

They are indeed terrible dogs, these dog-roses. No wonder she blushes at them, or is it because ever-watchful Corydon leaves the bridge and walks towards her,

trying to look unconscious. In another moment his hands are full, one with a milk-pail and the other with Lalage's waist. No wonder your mother scolds you for being so late with the milk, pretty Lalage; it was not the friskiness of the cows that delayed you.

Ah! that careless, happy whistle. Here he comes, the idle schoolboy! What a jolly boy! How strong, and wholesome, and English he looks—not clever, perhaps, but intelligent and brave—a face that can never look lost and evil, whether you see it sleek and rosy as he smiles at you over the half-door of the mill yonder, or rigid and pale as he lies with sightless eyes turned up to the stars, after one of the fights for which England so often needs her sons!

Yes, here he is, with dread of books and love of fun. The school-bell's warning is still more jerky and imperative. Come,

come, come! it rings out; but he only saunters along with his hands in his pockets, and he whistles to himself vaguely, but very sweetly. He is in no hurry, but has lots of business to transact before school. Here are the horse-chestnuts in full flower overhead. How long will it be before they are ready to string and play 'conqueror' with? Then, when he passes the gate into the last water meadow (where Lalage's cows took so long a-milking), a lark starts flickering upwards with an anxious quaver in her voice. He is intimately acquainted with her—knows all her family affairs. She has three promising eggs in her trim nest, that is cunningly curled into the middle of a tuft of coarse grass at which the cows turn up their noses; he must peep at them. He would steal them, only he is waiting—cold-blooded plunderer—for them to hatch; and then weep and mourn, thou Rachel among

larks, for this young Herod will take all thy brood.

While in the water meadows, he remembers a gravel-bottomed pool down by the pollards, by which the watercress is so green and tender, and the forget-me-nots and marish so plentiful.

Do not the big perch in full armour, and with their gold and black belts gleaming, love that clear pool above all others? He creeps down to the edge very cautiously. The whistling is stopped now. Yes; there they cruise along in the sunlight, their shadows gliding across the golden floor of the pool. The biggest of all took his best line and hook away last Saturday, but he does not seem any the worse for the dose of iron. He must try for him again next half-holiday. Then he goes, but very leisurely, and whistling again—incorrigible boy!

As he gets back over the gate a cart

rattles along, meeting him.. In it sits a neighbouring farmer bound for market—a large, comfortable man. The farmer takes his pipe out of his mouth, and, with a backward jerk of his head in the direction of the school, calls out, 'Truanting again, eh, lad?' The young sinner laughs back, and the farmer's face relaxes from its mock gravity to a cheery laugh also.

On goes the cart, revealing to our idler five lambs with their noses pushed painfully upwards into the netting over them. To look at this he walks backward at least ten paces, till a puddle in the line of march sends a stream of muddy water up his leg. And then the bell stops! And now he does run! At the schoolroom door five minutes later he feels in his pockets for his beloved knife and the alley taw; they are safe, and so into the dominie's presence.

What though Nemesis, tempered by thy stout corduroys, awaits thee at the hands

of the schoolmaster, peering at thee over his spectacles—little thou carest!

'Strife comes with manhood,
And waking with day.'

So wander along, bright schoolboy; there is time enough for books, and care, and tears, and unanswered prayers. Wander along, and remember only to be as honest, and frank, and true-hearted as now.

And thou, too, sweet bird, thou hast learnt the philosophy of life—not to care, not to grieve, not to look forward. He that doth the ravens feed will surely think of thee. Sing on, and tell us, poor men and women, thy fairy tale of youth and hope, and of what the world was like when we were young and innocent too.

Epimetheus was wiser than his anxious toiling brother Prometheus (the forward looker), after all; and though the feet of

memory are tender, and the retrospect may be across a vale of tears, and the ghosts of 'deeds best left undone' may rise to reproach us; yet even so I think that God has sent thee with thy simple music to give us once more a glimpse of the dear days of youth.

WATER!

A MEMORY OF THE MUTINY.

In this memory I have to go over much ground that has been thoroughly and well worked already; but I hope that the main incidents of the story will be deemed a sufficient excuse by my readers. I would not pose as a rival, or even humble imitator, of those masters whose writings have, outside history, commemorated the scenes of the Indian Mutiny. I only wish to tell one of my own experiences during that terrible time, because the story of that experience may prove interesting, and may help, however slightly, to show to pes-

simists how much good there is to be found, by those who seek it, amongst even the most stunted natures.

I was a subaltern in those days; and my company had just marched, one hundred strong, with several women and children, an apothecary, our captain, and myself, to relieve a distant detachment of 'ours,' when the Mutiny blazed out and transformed Anglo-Indian life into so many isolated centres of heroic, and, alas! too often vain, resistance to the hordes that encompassed them. The stories of Lucknow and of Arah have told what scenes these little communities presented. Our march was along the Upper Ganges Valley, and for the most part through independent territory; when half of our journey was accomplished the storm of rebellion swept over us with no preliminary warning beyond the withholding of commissariat supplies by native headmen of

the villages on the road and a general tone of new-born insolence on their part. To these symptoms we paid little attention, as the local Rajah was known to dislike our rule; but an old native follower of the regiment put us on our guard by the earnest way in which he told the captain and myself that the sacred *chuppattee* the signal for revolt, was being carried throughout the land.

Captain X. was an old campaigner, and accordingly arranged our daily halts with a view to security from a sudden attack. It soon came, and we found ourselves one evening beleaguered in a large travellers' bungalow, or rest-house, about half a mile from the Rajah's chief town, and on the bank of the snow-fed Eson River. I will describe our position, that the reader may thoroughly understand the events I have to tell. The bungalow was a large square, one of the common Indian type, standing

in a 'compound' of similar shape on the north side of the Grand Trunk Road, which here ran almost east and west; the 'compound' was about one hundred and fifty yards square; outside its northern hedge, and at a distance of from a hundred to a hundred and fifty yards from it, ran the Eson, which here made a semicircular sweep from north-west to north-east. The space between the hedge and the river was covered with grass and melon-pits, and sloped gently down to the stream, on the opposite side of which was a steep cliff. As usual with snow-fed streams in April, the Eson was in full flood, as the sun of early summer thawed the snows from which it drew its waters. The 'compound' was enclosed, fortunately for us, by a thick hedge of prickly pear, and behind this natural impediment we rapidly threw up a strong breastwork of earth. In the north-east angle was a row of mud-built stables

and servants' dwellings. The road front was clear and level, and afforded little opportunity for the enemy to mass unseen or 'rush' us from that direction. As we had heard of our danger in time, we had seized all the stores of food ready to hand. We had our transport cattle with us, and a small flock of sheep that were grazing on the river's bank. The melon-pits afforded us a fair supply of vegetable food; we had plenty of ammunition; and so we were comparatively well-off for all the necessities of life and of resistance, except one. There was a well of drinking-water in the 'compound,' but it was small and fed but slowly by springs, and the hot weather was coming on apace.

There were many old soldiers in the company, men who wore the Sikh medal on their breasts, and our place of refuge was soon converted by them into a strong and well-flanked position. The bungalow,

like most Indian houses, had a bath-room built out from each of its corners, and these gave a flanking fire. It stood, too, on a stone plinth about four feet high, and, luckily, the roof, instead of being thatched like most Hindoo buildings, was flat, and had a brickwork parapet round it, after the Mussulman fashion. The out-buildings were partly turned into little block-houses for our outlying piquet and native followers, partly demolished, and the materials used to strengthen our parapets; so that the numerous but undisciplined followers of the rebel chief who invested us were held well at arm's-length.

As usual in tropical climates, nature soon proved our great enemy and the mutineers' strongest ally. After a fortnight's siege the heat began to tell upon us. Of the two centre rooms in the bungalow one was allotted to the women and children, the other to the sick; there were

four bedrooms, two of which the captain and myself occupied, and in them all our stores and ammunition were placed; the other two were used by the men off duty. The four bath-rooms were loopholed and occupied by little parties of sharpshooters, whose fire flanked the bungalow on every side. The children were the first to suffer. Every day their crying grew more incessant. Their mothers became paler and more languid; and while feverish lips demanded daily more water, daily the well yielded less. Deep and cool, indeed, ran the Eson a few hundred paces off, but it was a very river of Tantalus, for the enemy soon lined the high bank opposite, and we had lost so many men while bringing up water from it that the river had to be placed out of bounds. At last we had to put a sentry on the well, and to limit the quantity of water allowed for each person; three pints each daily was all that could be

spared. This was very little for the tired, dust-choked man who had for twenty-four hours been holding the enemy at bay, almost at the bayonet's point, who had walked to and fro in anxious watching and peering through the dark night for the stealthy advance, followed by the leaden hail and the savage rush of the mutineers up to our little entrenchment. Our cattle, too, made short work of the grass in the compound, and our meat was coming to an end. Saxons have a hard time with only *chuppattees* to eat and fight on.

Day by day the situation grew more gloomy. Deaths were frequent, not only by musket shot, but by sunstroke and fever; and the terrible question had constantly to be answered, 'Where to bury our dead?' The ten families of women and children in the great dining-room had dwindled down to six pallid women and about fifteen silent children that huddled

feebly round them. Our captain, strong, dauntless heart that he was, began to look bowed and anxious. The little apothecary was a good fellow; but he had few and inadequate medicines, for quinine was almost unknown in those days. Daily the dole of water caused more heartrending scenes. It always looks bad, even desperate, when strong men begin to lose the unconscious chivalry that is usually shown towards women and sick; but now the big soldiers began to fight for water. Gamblers gambled for it, the cunning schemed for it or stole it; the weak ones went to the wall. Of course, we kept discipline up all the more strictly, in face of the danger from without and the trying ordeal from within; but in times like these one has to look on many fierce, almost brutal scenes, with eyes that officially see not.

There was one lad in the company, a strange, impish boy, recently drafted into

the regiment from England, whose character had already struck me as being very curious, and only wanting a little more force in it to be sinister. He was simply a city arab, a type of soldier unknown in the British army before the Crimean War. As such he did not get on well with his comrades, big, staid, simple old Indian soldiers, as most of them were. He was a suspected thief, too; and complaints were often made to us that someone, supposed to be he, stole the food and water left by the men in their pannikins for a scanty drink and meal when coming off duty at the parapets; but he was very cunning, and no one hitherto had been able to catch him red-handed." Somehow I could not help feeling sorry for the young scoundrel, in spite of his bad character. His pale, prematurely old young face had something pitiful in it, and he was thin and weak. There was a good amount of pluck

about him, though, for one day, during a determined rush of the mutineers on our outworks, I noticed him, with his little cunning eyes flashing and his lips set, fighting as hard as any of us. In the middle of it he happened to look my way, and I could not help smiling, and giving him a nod of encouragement. Poor lad! I have often since felt glad to think I did so. After this I had several conversations with him, and was at once interested and appalled at the sordid horror of his former life. No need to repeat any of it—the hand-to-mouth city arab existence, the meal of garbage, the night in a slum, the want and vice in which the 'stony-hearted stepmother' had reared him, are well-known phases of life, and are painful to think of. I often wondered for him and for our country how 'pluck' could be born in, and survive, such unfortunate surroundings.

One night, when quietly visiting the sentries, I found young Cosins (that was his name) on duty at the well. As I came near I saw him quickly and furtively stoop as if to put something down behind a stone that lay close by. After hearing his orders, I, as if by chance, poked with my foot behind the stone and kicked against a tin can half full of water, and with a long string attached—he had been stealing water, one of the worst and most selfish offences in our little garrison. I turned to him and spoke sharply and warmly; what my words were I almost forget, but I finished up by saying, 'You seemed to be turning into a soldier. Why can't you try to become a "gentleman," too, instead of robbing helpless women and children?'

Perhaps it was the incongruity of the word 'gentleman' as applied to him or his actions, for somehow my words seemed to have a great effect, and, ignorant young

blackguard that he was, an expression came into his face that said to me, 'Do not punish him this time.' Accordingly, I kept silence on the subject, and ordered the sergeant, who, as usual, accompanied me on my rounds, to do the same. Officially I was wrong, but I think my readers will say it was best so.

Thus the terrible days and nights of suffering lagged on; the enemy grew bolder as we grew weaker, and at last they began to push parallels up towards our outworks. From one of these they soon opened a heavy fire into our position. This fire was especially galling to those drawing water from our well, as the process was a long one, and the wall round the well made those drawing water expose themselves as they stood on it; accordingly, our captain ordered me to take every available man and heighten the earthwork opposite the enemy's new position. It was

a terrible task, for the soil was baked hard as iron by the fierce summer sun, the men available were few, and such tools as we had were by now almost worn out. We all worked like slaves, those without tools tearing up and carrying the clods and stones in their hands; and during the day two of our working party were struck down by sunstroke, and four by the enemy's bullets.

That night I felt very queer about the head, and unable to eat my frugal dinner, though I eagerly gulped down my half-rations of water. To lay up was impossible, and the next day, and the next after that, saw us working without cessation, raising and strengthening our parapets. Daily my head grew worse, and when this task was done I was 'done' too. I do not know how I reached my room that last evening, but vaguely, as through a raging hell of fire and a wild throbbing of

steam-hammers in my brain, I heard the captain and the apothecary talking together. The latter said, 'Yes, sir, I'm afraid he'll follow the other two; I can't cure sun-stroke without water.'

'Poor old chap, it's a bad business!' was all the captain said; and then he went out, too hard worked with all those dependent upon him to be able to spend more than a few minutes even by his greatest chum's sick-bed.

Then the night fell, and I lay tossing with fever. As the intense heat of the day gave place to the comparative cool of night, the pain grew less, and strange dreams succeeded the awful throbbing that had well-nigh driven me mad during the last three days. Through it all a pale, cunning, insignificant face seemed to appear at times by my bedside with a quaint look of mingled solicitude and awkwardness in it; but my thirst was

awful. I learnt afterwards that two extra rations of water daily were allowed me during this time (six pints a day extra for a man mad with the sun is not much), and this had barely enabled my hospital orderly to keep my head damp; the wet rags seemed to dry and almost shrivel up one minute after they were put on. So the night passed, and the next day too, with its sweltering heat, its alarms and general misery, and again night fell. About eleven o'clock I became again conscious, the apothecary stood over me; he looked very helpless, and the words of the previous evening were written on his face—'Can't save him without water.' As he went away Private Cosins entered the room again, and, coming to my side, raised my head upon his arm and put a can of water to my lips. I suppose I looked at him, though there was no questioning, or, indeed, rational thought or sense of per-

sonal interest in my mind, but he said quickly, 'It ain't stolen, sir.'

I learnt later on that it was a present from him and another man in the company, the evening half of their joint ration of the precious fluid.

That night was still and dark, for the moon, in its last quarter, would not rise till three a.m., and I felt, though vaguely, the calm that they say often precedes death. A 'brain fever' bird shrieked at intervals in a jack-fruit tree outside my half-barricaded, half-open window. The muffled tramp of the foot-sore sentries round the ramparts, the scramble of rats in the roof, the swarming clouds of never-resting flies, the shrill vibrating call of the cicalas in the cactus hedges, the moans of the sick and wounded in the adjoining room, the weak cries of children that could not sleep, and the almost equally weak crooning of the poor mothers, then a

dropping shot or two from the enemy, sometimes a low, cautious challenge and its answer. So the night sweltered on; all these things I seemed to notice more or less as the incidents of a mad dream—a dream full of pointless episodes, and fraught with awful pain.

Suddenly I felt a sensation of relief, slight at first, but growing ever more intense and more restful. The steam hammers seemed to cease their savage blacksmith's work, the flames to die down, and I to be at home in England, lying in the meadows by my favourite trout stream, and anon to be dead beneath cool rippling waves. Then came sweet sleep, through which the waters still flowed and rippled around and above me.

I must have slept three or four hours, when the sound of waters ceased and I awoke; it was broad moonlight, and I raised myself on my elbow, and looked

through the loophole in the window by which my bed stood, towards the northern breastwork. How the ground gleamed! How inky black the shadows! Two small owls, anticipating day in the white moonlight, were chattering hard by where the 'brain fever' bird had shrieked before. The sound of the rapid Eson floated across the parched plain, and on the cliff beyond glimmered the watch-fires of the enemy.

But what is that stealthy form that crosses the 'compound' from the veranda? The sentry on the river front of the camp challenges just audibly; the stealthy figure answers and approaches him. What is that in his hand? A limp, dark, sack-like thing. The sentry and the other man seem to argue. Their looks turn towards the guard-house, and towards the camp-fires above the river. The sentry turns quickly away and walks to the far angle of the breastwork, then—good heavens! can

there be deserters here? The stealthy figure mounts the parapet and, sack and all, springs over the cactus hedge without, and is lost to view. My mind was too prostrate for any sense of personal interest or responsibility to enter it. I lay down again, and again dropped off to sleep. As I did so, I seemed to hear the hammers at work again in my brain; but no, it was rather a straggling volley of musketry. Then several single shots from the direction of the river, some wild shouts in Hindostani, and—again the rippling waters flowed round me, and—perfect rest!

When I awoke, my first feeling was one of absolute recovery; but how wet I was! By my side was a curious glug-glug and flopping sound, as of water flowing from a nearly empty vessel, and I opened my eyes. The sunrise was marking the sky with the pallid streaks of a hot weather dawn, the life without was audible in

innumerable articulate and inarticulate sounds, a cool breeze 'blew from the face of the sun' round the bungalow, and behind me I heard a strange sound as of a distressed runner breathing heavily and in pain. I looked round languidly, and in the dim light saw Private Cosins, half sitting in a chair, half propped up against the *charpoy*, or bed, on which I lay. On my pillow was a large, nearly empty *mussack*, or leather waterskin, the mouth of which he held against my head. His face was paler and more pinched even than before, the little cunning eyes were fixed on me anxiously, and I spoke:

'Why, Cosins, man, what have you been doing? Where did you get all this water? You've saved my life, I do believe; but I hope you didn't take it from the well.'

I stretched out my hand in thanks to him; but as I spoke, the apothecary's footstep sounded in the veranda without.

The city arab rose slowly and painfully from his seat, and, letting the mouth of the waterskin drop limply from his hand, he came round from the head of the bed to my side and took my hand and spoke:

'No, sir. I didn't steal no water this time; I got it all fair and aboveboard; only don't tell the captain, sir. I know it's agin' orders.'

Then the apothecary entered. The opened door threw a full flood of light on all the room, and he and I, the standing and the prostrate, realized, as if by a lightning flash, the truth. The bare stone floor around my bed was one great pool of water, across which, like veins of red in gray marble, ran the crimson life-blood of the poor lad. Still holding my hand, he sank on one knee on the wet stones, and as his face came level with mine, and the light of the morning grew stronger, I looked at him with more comprehensive

eyes, and as I looked I marvelled. Shall I ever forget that face, transfigured with a beauty born of the noblest of all acts—self devotion, and the giving up of one's life for another? The mean, commonplace features seemed to be endowed with something other than earthly beauty, and infinitely beyond it; all the furtive cunning had passed from his eyes, and on the breast of his coat was a great red stain, that told where the too sure bullet of a mutineer marksman had struck him when at the river's bank on his *second* and *moonlit* journey there for water for me. He was dying fast, but the instincts of a soldier seemed to be even now growing stronger in him. Again he spoke.

'Don't tell the captain, sir; I won't disobey orders never agin.' Then, 'Can yer spare me a drop of that 'ere water? I never could do without a lot of water, sir.'

* * * * *

'Don't tell the captain!

Poor stinted, darkened life—nay, rather, brave English heart! Little matter what the captain is told about your disobedience of orders now; and I think God will not need to be told how, by your disobedience of an earthly order, you obeyed a far higher bidding.

THE END.

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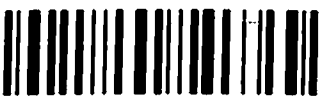
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